



THE CORSAIRS



OR  
LOVE AND  
LUCRE.



JOHN HILL.





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V.

THE CORSARS;

OR,

LOVE AND LUCRE.

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V.

THE CORSARS;  
OR,  
LOVE AND LUCRE.

By JOHN HILL,

AUTHOR OF "THE WATERS OF MARAH," "SALLY," ETC.



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Kabana

It is right that I should say that in the composition of Chapters I. and II. of this story, I am indebted to my friend Henry George Murray for his assistance. The rest of the book is wholly my own work—such as it is.

JOHN HILL.

Ans. Rev. May 5 July 5, 1857





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# THE CORSARS;

OR,

## LOVE AND LUCRE.

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### CHAPTER I.

CORSAR AND SON.

It is not every young man of seven-and-twenty or so who has a father. Still fewer, in all probability, have such a one as Carl Corsar had, whatever their age. Almost every young creature probably regards its father as something god-like, infallible, omnipotent—a present help in time of trouble, a source of all good, a just and merciful dispenser of reward and punishment. The shock of finding all this to be not merely partially true, as in most cases, but wholly and hideously false, as in this, is a horrible one, and Carl received it on arriving at years of precocious perception.

The bland, cultured, and courtly person who bore that relation to Carl had been his bad angel, and the lad had never found a compensating good one.

Mr. Corsar, senior, was undoubtedly entitled to the description of gentleman by birth, but he had alienated his right to the title by his own acts and deeds and thoughts—which are, indeed, more than acts. Brought up with good education and plenteous fortune, he had misused the former and dribbled and gambled away the latter. Having wasted one fortune, he married another, in days long previous to the Married Women's Property Act, and spent it much as before, except that stocks and shares, instead of cards and betting, became the medium

—the sieve—through which he shook out his own and, as much as possible, other people's capital.

The unhappy woman who had married him for the reason women do marry plausible scoundrels, because she loved him, had left him, after having had the flimsy ethical common-places in which she had been reared battered out of her by the cool and keen unscrupulousness of her husband's tongue and life. That is long ago now. She died in Paris, and was buried at the expense of the arrondissement under a fictitious name—for no one knew her real name except her husband, and he did not care anything about her. She left a son, Carl Corsar.

Mr. James Corsar was usually to be found by visitors in well-practised poses, in a round-backed writing-chair, which gyrated on a swivel, with a cigarette in his mouth, and a subfusc decorously fashionable suit on his elegant if angular body, gold eye-glasses on the aristocratic bridge of his nose, and an expression of calm dignity and bland appreciation of his own worth. His face was handsome in the Napoleonic style, a bloodless, ageless face. Viewed from some yards' distance by candlelight, he might have been Romeo; seen in the close, cruel candour of morning sunshine he was almost Lear. He had a useful set of facial expressions for every-day purposes—polite surprise, reverent attention, gentle scorn, &c.—which years of mirror-study enabled him to assume at will.

There was one other expression which had once or twice been seen on him by his friend Cyrus Shute and a very few other people. It came of its own accord, and was by no means the result of practice. It was once observed when a gentleman of French origin, in the city of New Orleans, threw his lost stakes in Corsar's face, so that his lip bled, and the dollars and notes were strewn on the floor. The gentleman of French origin was shortly afterwards strewn on the floor, and passed out of currency, which the stakes did not. It was not a nice expression. Cyrus Shute remarked that it was a hell of a face. It was.

Mr. Corsar was fond of proclaiming his insuperable attachment to the ideas of the Old School and the *ancien régime*. He used both phrases, but especially preferred the latter. He was the *vieux gentilhomme*, living, with a touching mixture of pride and humility, in the irreverent to-day,



among the demagogic hordes who had seized and squandered the lands and treasures his by birth and blood-right. At least that was the theory he advanced, and resembles the phraseology in which he enounced it. Iron-grey old wit and beau that he was, his little drolleries and epigrams acquired a fictitious value from the air with which they were delivered, and served, no less than his pathos and pride, to screen the colossal humbug and infinite moral rottenness that lay behind them all.

He had a pale, opaque skin, blue-shaded where he shaved, which was everywhere possible on his face—that, too, being part of the *ancien régime*, no doubt; and a fine set of steely-white teeth—a very advantageous possession to the frequent smiler. His eyes were dark, circum-bistred, sunken, and inscrutable; his eyebrows black and marked, and strongly contrasting with his short, iron-grey hair. When he sat in his swivel-chair, his white ringed hands crossed upon his knee, his clear-cut, full-fleshed, Napoleonic face slightly uplifted, his body clothed in old but elegantly cut clothes, and linen beyond criticism, he suggested irresistibly the Portrait of a Gentleman—in reduced circumstances, as a witty spectator once described it.

This person had, while taking his son with him as a lad on his frequent, varied, and often sudden pilgrimages, taught him to disbelieve in any meaning or purpose in life except that it was a source of pleasure and pain, the former sought and seldom found, the latter avoided but seldom escaped; otherwise, as a mere mill for grinding young into old, a process which to Carl seemed to advance rapidly. Then in the kindest and most neatly expressed manner in the world, Mr. Corsar compelled his son to admit the fact that if he chose to attach himself to those rigid and peculiar tenets which were coarsely and vulgarly known as common honesty, there must be a separation, a split. In fact, Carl must learn to adapt himself to his environment in life alone and unaided, and survive if he could. Carl took the latter alternative, and came to London alone, at eighteen, with a present of a few pounds given in a lucky and benevolent moment from his father. Carl was no greenhorn at that age. No son of James Corsar could be that at any age; but he felt lonely, and looked round him at the vast, gas-speckled murkiness of London, wondering where the “opening” was.

Carl had lived mostly in those small French towns peopled by a shameless, shabby society of British defalcators; and such families and boarding-houses and *réunions* surrounded him as are usually described by the term "shady." And in these abodes of vitiated talent, battered reputation, and all uncleanness, Carl had grown up, when he ought to have been playing cricket and football in England. And so he came to England at eighteen, with the cynicism and blasphemy of a French comic journalist on his lips, a handsome thin face, with the expression of eight-and-twenty, a keen brain, a great appetite, and a light pocket. He revered neither man nor woman—nor anything else, certainly not children.

That was simple enough. He had never known a man or woman who could be revered or believed in to any great extent. Men hitherto had been to him creatures who played at billiards for *petits verres*, and touched the balls and altered the scores shamelessly; who played cards for *petits verres*, cheated shamelessly, drank a great many *petits verres*, smoked many cigarettes, evaded their pecuniary obligations, even their debts of what they call honour to each other; abused one another when absent on every opportunity to whatever third party chose to listen; read the *Almanach des Cocottes*; and always talked about fabulous remittances they were expecting from England from their connections in the House of Peers. Women had been creatures quite worthy of such men, who had petted and well-nigh spoiled him on account of his good looks and straightforward nature, until time taught him that such blandishments were a fraud and a weariness.

He had passed, therefore, through the school of impecuniosity, quite understood what the struggle for existence meant, and analysed the atmosphere of humbug into its component parts. In London he began to put his experience to some use. He spoke French readily, and managed to get a post as assistant in a large cheap shop, one of those places of vast dimensions where everything is sold at a low price, and where the rules are long hours and low wages.

Beyond this Carl was in the receipt of nothing a year, with a colossal and problematic fortune in the remote perspective of paternal assurances, payable, as Carl pleasantly put it, three months and six days after the inauguration of the millennium. To a less robust mind, the hideous monotony and



small chicanery of the great shop would have been "a good take-off for a plunge from Hungerford Bridge," again to quote Carl's peculiar style of pleasantry. He, however, did nothing of the kind. He stood and measured out glass-cloth at fourpence three-farthings\* per yard in the day, and he studied and attended classes at night. At some period he slept and took meals, but record omits to say when.

One day he got a holiday, went to the University of Fenchester, in East Anglia, and to his immense surprise and joy won a scholarship in science at the ancient and loyal foundation of Audit College. A few years passed. He took annual prizes, and a high place in the final examination, and became a private tutor or "coach," was appointed an assistant lecturer in his special subject, and began to be betted on as the next Science Fellow.

Near this period Mr. Corsar, sen., appeared in London, elegant, smiling, and mysteriously affluent. He took apartments in the convenient but expensive locality of Jermyn Street, and expanded and shone with benevolence, dignity, and Worth. Not wit, wealth, or piety did he pride himself on, but Worth, solid, sterling Worth. He had quite accepted the notion of Carl's success, and patted himself on the back for having caused it. "You are prospering at Audit?" said he to his son, when the latter called on him, after the father had pitched his moving tent in Jermyn Street.

"Well, yes, more or less."

"That is well. The more you cultivate the habit of self-support the better. It gives a knowledge of the world and a desire to excel. That is why I gave you a good education."

"Oh, you did?"

"Eh? Yes. And it is particularly fortunate for you that you have managed to add to your little income by your own exertions, as it is not just yet in my power to give you that liberal allowance which I think due to a son of mine."

"Thanks."

"Not at all. Not at all. We are not responsible for our natural affections. They are implanted, I may say, like our family pride, or our—in fact, family features. You are a handsome dog, Carl. You'll damage some fair heart yet."

"Thanks."

Mr. Corsar suddenly changed his tone :

"Hang it, sir, don't be so infernally monosyllabic and dry.

It is irritating and impertinent. Although we may differ on matters of opinion, we may be civil. I'm your father."

"Well, I can't help that. What do you want? Help? I can afford to let you have £100 a year now, with a little extra effort. Look here, will you take it, and live—where you please, anywhere, except among those infernal sharks and tigers at Plageville-sur-Mer, and keep on the right side of the law?"

"You're a sort of fool, Carl. Too much learning hath made thee mad, eh? Can you imagine me—me, living on £100 a year, *anywhere*? No. Don't make degrading suggestions. Don't try and pension off your old father on condition he keeps out of the way. That's not nice in you, Carl. It is not what I expect from my son."

"I never said or implied that at all. However, let that go. What *do* you expect from your son, I wonder?"

"Nothing. There. Except a little civility, and a little consideration. Pity, if you like. Carl, I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks. As for the sharks and tigers, I hate 'em. They bore me. They are vulgar and irritating to a degree. I have done with them I hope for a time, perhaps for ever. Now if you are not ashamed, in your beautiful pride and prejudice, to stay here a little longer and listen, I'll give you a little advice, as I can't give you anything better, the advantage of the excess of my years over yours. I do this from a sense of duty, though the ribald youth of the day would say I do it from the natural pleasure the old take in laying down the law to the young."

Mr. Corsar's calm dignity had quite returned now. "I am going to speak in all earnest sincerity to you, a thing you will have observed I do not invariably feel compelled to do."

"I have."

"Don't make flippant interruptions. Learn to distinguish mere smartness and repartee from true and spontaneous quiet wit. Of course I can't give you experience. You will get that for yourself, and I hope you will like it. I was myself once, as you may have heard, a fellow-commoner at Audit, though I did not take a degree—like many great men who have since earned distinction. I did not in fact stay sufficiently long. The place itself was well enough—well enough, but it disagreed with me. Many places do."

Carl smiled grimly and nodded.

"To go more into detail, I would recommend any young man of parts there to behave as follows. To your superiors—supposing you still feel that you have any, after five-and-twenty years or so of residence on this planet—be courteous and submissive in demeanour, preserving in the meantime a complete independence of opinion and action in all matters. Probably some of the dons are gentlemen of taste and education now, though I dare say many of the old school of eating-and-drinking machines are left."

"They are some of the most famous and hardworking men in the country."

"Ah! you are enthusiastic. A good sign."

"No, I'm not. I'm merely stating well-known facts."

"Avoid that dry, persistent, argumentative style as you would poison. It will make you very unpopular. And in a general way, 'put money in thy purse,' as it is fortunately in your power, though not yet in mine, to do. Don't be in too great a hurry to make friends. A man with your brains and face ought always to be able to get useful friends. Therefore, I say, don't take up out of mere foolish good-nature with fellows who may prove bores, or borrowers, or both."

"Don't think 'mere foolish good-nature' is one of my weak points."

"Ah, well. I think there is much of the milk of human kindness running in our veins."

"Maybe. But it's turned, and lactic acid fermentation set in some years ago."

"For goodness' sake don't drag your professional jokes into private and social conversation. You *must* get rid of these little *gaucheries*, or I shall think England has made you like her own dear blundering, dunderheaded self. Cultivate yourself. Cultivate cultivated friends." Mr. Corsar liked to play with his words in this airy style. He thought, like the alliterative poet, that "it argueth facility." "I had several very intellectual friends myself. There was old Miller. He's a celebrated professor of something now; and Lyatt—Harry Lyatt—he adorns the English bar. We three have heard the chimes quite as late as Shallow did, if not later. However, I must not talk reminiscences, or I shall resemble that justice of the peace too much. Well, I am just an old buck with wits enough inside my head to keep me from putting a purple wig outside it, so bear with me, and hear the last words—on

this occasion—of one who by acting on his own maxims has led a remarkably pleasant and not unexciting life. I'll write memoirs some day. Remember, there is no time like youth, and it is soon gone, though care and skill may preserve a ghastly similitude of it for some years—*vide* a few highly distinguished members of my club. Take in this world what pleasure you can get. Remorse and all that are generally bearable." (By Jove! thought Carl, he's getting sincere now.) "I wouldn't gamble, as to a person of your rigid and admirable principles it would as a rule be a losing concern. If you have love affairs—as of course you have by the dozen—manage that the other party to the concern shall always be more in love than you are. 'Il ye toujours une qui tend la joue.' Never show pain or provocation, but always give back an injury in excess of what you receive. Never repent. You needn't do things, but if you do, don't repent. And with good health and food——" Knock.

"A gentlemen to see you, sir."

"I told you I wasn't at home!"

"So I told him, sir."

"What did he say?"

"Said he'd step up and wait, sir."

"That's cool. What sort of a person?"

"Rich-looking. Not a gentleman, sir, exactly." (Meaning that he, the visitor, had given no *largesse* to him, the menial.)

"Name?"

"Colonel Shute, sir."

"Ah! well, show him up. Don't show any one else up. Go away, Carl. Excuse my abruptness, but this may mean business."



## CHAPTER II.

### CORSAR AND PARTNER.

WHILE the servant descended, and the visitor ascended, Mr. Corsar sat in his swivel-chair and stared upon the fog. The paternal expression and dignified attitude were gone. His limbs relaxed, he almost sprawled, and his eyes stared gloomily at the fog. He was not thinking of the fog, though it was the most conspicuous thing present to think about, and so thick and so penetrating that it hung in sad festoons round the gas globes, and gave the atmosphere a distinct taste, a very nasty taste, suggesting the relit stump of a Dutch cigar early in the morning on an empty stomach. Mr. Corsar thought: "Now it's like that brute's infernal keenness and beastly greed to come down on me just because I've got a pound or two more than usual. He shan't get it, not a pewter farthing, or brass either."

"Ah, Shute! welcome again. How are you, old friend? Well, I hope. So you have found me out at last."

"I have so."

The speaker was a short, sturdy man, with an egg-shaped head, covered with streaky dark fur which came to a point in the middle of the high forehead, and was shorn very close, so as to be incapable of parting. His eyes were small, grey, bright, and hard, and lay in wait as it were behind fine gold spectacles. His nose was large and hooked, his cheeks had a tendency to hollowness, and his chin came well to the front from under a short thick moustache, dark and streaky like the hair. It was not a handsome face, but it was a distinct one, such as crowds are not made of. He wore a black broad-cloth coat, unbuttoned to display a sealskin waistcoat and a very massive gold chain. His trousers were of shepherd's tartan, and his boots, which were rather large, but pointed and elegant, shone with unearthly brilliancy and newness,

while their dimensions were called attention to rather than disguised by white gaiters of the description called spats in these days. Prosperous but uncultured city man, the casual observer would remark on beholding this gorgeous whole. The casual observer would of course be wrong, as he generally is, but Cyrus Shute knew that pretty well, even as he knew that the world is largely made up of casual observers who come to erroneous conclusions.

This person took up a position on the hearthrug, that position so graceful and characteristic of the English-speaking race in which the hands separate the coat-tails behind, bring them in two lateral sheaves to the front, and keep them in that position by plunging themselves into the trouser-pockets. And he contemplated Mr. Corsar serenely and silently. The latter looked bored and impatient. Finding the cordial and hearty tone ineffective, he said shortly—

“Well, what do you want?”

“A drink, anyhow. Your climate I find, like most others, productive of thirst.”

Mr. Corsar placed a bottle of whisky on the table and one glass. Shute administered to himself freely.

“You will have a drink, too, sir?”

“I suppose I must humour your superstitions.”

And Mr. Corsar languidly fetched a second glass and drank a very little whisky largely diluted.

“And now, may I again ask to what I am indebted for this visit?” asked Mr. Corsar, with frigid dignity.

“How?”

“Will you explain why you are here?”

“Well—yes. That’s what I came to do.”

Cyrus Shute helped himself to a cigarette he observed in a box behind him on the chimney, and lit it deliberately.

“You don’t seem in a pressing hurry about it. Will another time do as well? I am rather busy just now.”

“Are you now? Been asked by the Secretary of State for your advice on the Eastern Question maybe? Telegraphing to your duly sworn broker to buy a million or two more United Preference likely? No. I thank you. This occasion will suit me elegant, if you can spare me half an hour of your valuable time for cam and private discussion.”

Mr. Corsar leaned back resignedly in his chair and waited.

“Sir,” said the dweller on the hearthrug, in the black



bearskin of which his gay feet gleamed, "it is some years now since we met. You are altered."

"You are not."

"No. But we will not at present discuss that. You are not the same man. You have become a frequenter of gilded saloons. You look haf-played out and sick. Now I knew a James Corsar once," continued this slow unappeasable talker to an imaginary third party (whom he occasionally called sir) "what was a man. Yes, indeed. None like unto him. Present sick-looking, fraudulent imitation sittin' before me specially unlike. Don't look as if he could droke up a prospectus of the International A—mal—gamated Oroid Bank, Limited, does he now? Man I remember did. Did it blame well, too. Principal depôt, Sam Costa's bar. Manager's office, wherever you could find the manager. Mostly in railroad cars and hotel elevators. European backers, Baring, Coutts, and Rothschild *ad lib*. Prospectus tearfully eloquent to the horny-handed (and lunkheaded) on the delooding bogus companies unhappily too common through the State. Implored 'em not to neglect this opportunity where a scheme had been devised which solved the problem of high interest and puffick security. Yes, sir! And the miner didn't neglect. The horny-handed sowed, and Corsar reaped—reaped 10,000 dollars like ten cents, and spent 'em like the same.

"To see him stand up before a safe with two bits and a bottle of Robinson County in it, and say to that crowd of ragin' devils that wanted to break in the safe first and lynch him after when the thing had bust: 'Boys, you can kill me. There are many of you and one of me. It won't be difficult. But I'm d——d if you take the savin's of the orphan and the mites of the widder 'cept across my body!'" And then to hear him gas and lie, and stroke their fur the right way, till they sauntered off meek and trustful. And to see him saunter off by the next cars, with the remainin' widows' and orphans' property safe in his vest pocket. James Corsar was a partner worth havin'. No man on this oblate sphere could lecture in England as he could on the Cause of the Chivalrous Secesher, himself (at the time) a ruined fragment of southern aristocracy, accompanied by his wounded and disabled veteran partner, the friend of Lee and confidant of Jackson, Colonel Cyrus Shute."

During the leisurely delivery of this monologue, Mr. Corsar

had brightened visibly. It was just possible that the visitor, whom in his haste he had mentally called "that brute," was not going to demand a loan (a euphemism of Shute's for extorting a gift), but had some purpose of a different and more friendly nature.

"Well, Shute, do sit down and explain," he said with more good humour.

Shute then took some small parcels out of his hat, and solemnly unfolded them on the table. They contained hard, glittering, variegated mineral lumps.

"What's that?" said he.

Mr. Corsar examined the lumps.

"Gold, by Jove!"

"And what's that?" he added, spreading a square of vellum beside them, with a large blue seal in the corner, and the following inscription:—

"ASSAY OFFICE, NEVADA, U.S.

"This is to certify that Messrs. \_\_\_\_\_, of the Black Gulch Gold Mining Company, having voluntarily forwarded to us samples of the rough ore from the mine working under their control. We have applied tests to the same, and have found the yield of the Anna Maria Mine to be exceptionably pure and easily worked."

(Signed and countersigned, largely and irregularly.)

"Where did you get that?" asked Mr. Corsar.

"Got it made up in blank—over there."

"Over where?"

"'Mur'ka."

"It's worth nothing. It is childish to expect people to believe in a thing like that."

"Over there, yes. Not here."

"Where's Black Gulch?"

"Don't know."

"Is there such a place?"

"Don't know. There may be. I never heard of it."

"Do you know, Shute, that this looks very much as if you were contemplating some kind of fraud?"

"Compared to which the Amalgamated Oroid was angelic rectitude. Well, maybe it does, some." And twitches came in the hollows of Cyrus Shute's cheeks above the ends of the moustache. That was his way of smiling.

"Where did you get the gold?"

"Prodded it up with the end of my stick while out for a walk."

"In the neighbourhood of Black Gulch?"

"About there. Scooped up a pocketful. Trod the place smooth. Bought haf an acre of simple farmin' party for small sum. Goin' to share profits with the intelligent and valuable assistance of my friend and former partner, James Corsar."

Cyrus winked here and twitched. The friend and former partner smiled benevolently.

"That's good in you, Shute, to think of an old friend. Do you know I really almost thought you had come to—in fact to borrow money."

"Now! Did you? Not me. If I go down I don't drag people with me. Not my way. No, sir."

It *was* Colonel Shute's way precisely, but no matter.

"I don't quite see this business yet. Tell me more about it."

Cyrus told. It appeared that he had really purchased a piece of ground between two really productive mines, that piece of ground having been given up by previous speculators as not worth the expense of a pickaxe, much less the complex machinery of modern mining, and holding every promise of remaining worthless to the end of time. He proposed starting a company with the professed object of working this, and at present wanted Corsar, as he pleasantly put it, to "droke up a pro—spectus," as his own brain, though keen, was not overburdened with the refinements of modern education. The leading notions of this he had "figured out," lucidly enough, in his own fashion on a piece of paper, which he submitted to Mr. Corsar. The latter inspected it. "Yes," he said, "something may possibly be done with this, let's see." And he wrote an experimental document on the lines of Shute's figuring out, of which the following is a true copy:—

#### "AMERICAN GOLD MINES.

"10,000 Shares Preferred, Registered, Treasury Stock of the Black Gulch Gold Mining Company, Black Gulch, Peterson County, Nevada U. S. (incorporated under the laws of the State of New York), to be sold at the greatly reduced price of 12s. per share (par rate \$25.)



“The property of the Company consist of the mine *Anna Maria*, which embraces considerably over one square mile of the same ledge (of inexhaustible wealth) as the *Perdition* and *Hallelujah* gold mines. This ledge teems with natural wealth in the form of free milling quartz in which wire gold can be perceived by the naked eye, of which the official assay the proportion of gold to be £120 to £190 per ton.

“Considerably over £3,000 has already been spent by the spirited board of control. Shafts have been already sunk respectively 80 and 60 feet and a tunnel is in 400 feet, being within 5 feet of the upper side of the ledge. Will tap it at a depth of 145 feet. Several veins of rich ore, averaging from 5 to 7 feet in thickness, have been laid bare, and in all of them the gold can plainly be discerned by the naked eye. Two thirty-stamp mills are already at work and have crushed a quantity of ore, yielding a gross average of £100 a ton. It is simply with the object of extending their operations, purchasing additional plant and machinery, and securing a greater command of skilled labour, that the Board of Directors have consented to sell the shares above mentioned.

“The Company, desiring to represent accruing profits at the most modest figure possible [here Shute twitched, while Mr. Corsar read on gravely and reverently], hopes, upon the realisation of the shares, to be upon a fixed dividend-paying basis, and expects, after full satisfaction of all claims for legitimate and unavoidable expenses, to pay an initial dividend of 3s. per month. It is confidently believed that, six months hence, the shares selling at the present low rate of 12s. will fetch at least from £15 to £20 each in any market in the world. Over caution may induce many to question the validity of that statement, but it is made upon careful and conscientious calculation by well-known speculators (who are themselves shareholders), and has been more than verified by the past experiences of thousands of individuals who owe their present fortunes to the happy investment of a few pounds—nay, perhaps even a few shillings—in speculations which promised infinitely less.

“The total yield of the mines in the Pacific States since 1849 would pay the national debt of Great Britain nearly twice over. As so small a sum is needed to defray the cost of the proposed extension of operations, and as the shares in the market are fast disappearing, intending purchasers are

implored to seize at once an opportunity which if once missed can never recur, and will be a cause of life-long regret.

"Subscriptions for ten shares (£6) will be received, for which certificates will in all cases be sent per registered mail to any address. Remittances may be made payable to \_\_\_\_\_, where also maps of the Black Gulch and neighbouring mining estates may be consulted."

And Mr. Corsar put down his papers and looked up blandly.

"How's that?" He had quite entered into the "humour of the thing," as he called it now.

"Pretty," said Cyrus. Then he added, "Now my notion is that you, the aristocratic and cultivated, go over and work my country, where you will be appreciated, and are perhaps less known, while I stay over here. You see, what the proud descendant of the Dutchmen at the Brevoort House might call vulgarity goes down over here as 'dry humour' and 'originality,' 'specially if backed by bullion. I must be pitchforked into a good social claim by you, and will open an office and pan out on maps and statistics and get a list of directors. Well, all that to be talked over. Think the thing looks like business?"

"It's crude just now, and will require great care. So many of these things have gone wrong lately, that even the British Owl is opening his eyes."

"Well, we'll have to shut 'em. Say, come and dine with me to-night, and talk! Your Criterion has points about it—what do you say?"

"If you will consent to be my guest?"

"I run this show up to now. No, sir! You dine with me. Hullo, who the holy ——?"

Carl had entered again. "I beg pardon," he said, "I didn't mean to interrupt."

"My son," said Mr. Corsar, laying his hand affectionately on Carl's shoulder, which the latter impatiently edged away. "Colonel Shute—an old friend."

"Glad to meet you, sir. If your son, Mr. Corsar, will join us to-night, I shall be real proud."

"Thanks," said Carl. "I came to say I was going up to the University to-day, so I must decline your kind invitation, whatever it was."

"Well, I'm sorry. Hope we shall meet again."

Carl did not reciprocate the hope. Each scrutinised the other keenly.

"I'm going now," said Shute, "come around and hev' a drink, Mr. Corsar, junior?"

"Thanks, haven't time."

"Well, next time," said the imperturbable Cyrus. "So long." And he went, Mr. Corsar ringing the bell.

"Who's that?" said Carl.

"A business acquaintance, a business acquaintance. A good fellow, but has a quaint manner."

"H'm. Tiger again, eh? Take care, father."

"I've always done that. Now you leave me alone, and I will leave you alone. I won't have you of all people criticising my affairs, especially when you know nothing about them. It is probable that you will not see me again for some time, so remember my advice. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, father. No good my saying anything at all?"

"Not a bit. Go your way, and rejoice that you are not as this publican."

"But I don't rejoice. Never said I did."

"Well, go your way, at all events, and leave me to go mine."



## CHAPTER III.

SANDY.

FAR away in the mythic æons, about the time when the labyrinthodon criticised the current notions of cosmogony, and determined to write his own ideas on the subject with his own hideous hands on the rocks, an angel came down on earth dressed as a monk—lest his angelic nature should be suspected, and make him unpopular, as did occasionally happen—and founded the ancient University of Fenchester. Such are the facts. Any Fenchester man will go to the stake for them, which is about the most convincing proof one can give of propositions otherwise unsupported by ordinary credibility.

This Fenchester, whether it arose by spontaneous generation, fortuitous concourse, or otherwise, is to this day not extinct, nor is there, in spite of old contrivances to make it expensive and exclusive, and modern dodges to make it cheap and accessible, and permanent wrangling over both, the slightest prospect of its extinction. The town has come into existence to supply the needs of the University, and its population consists of cooks, "coaches," bedmakers, livery-stable keepers, billiard-markers, grocers, tailors, money-lenders, booksellers, landladies, and other ladies. I am informed by a "Gazetteer" of the year 1822, that it has "considerable trade in iron, corn, and oil." I dare say it has. I never saw anything traded in its market except raw meat, ballad-sheets, bootlaces, and stony pears in their seasons.

Besides those of the University, which are imposing, though of every possible date, colour, and style, the principal public builings are public-houses. As a natural corollary to the above, there are also a county jail and asylum. The streets are narrow, distorted, and impure—qualities which seem mentally infectious to people who reside in them long.

Society is limited. There are the dons and their families,

the local clergy (who frequently wear gowns in the streets in discordant combination with tall hats) and their families, the "coaches" (who curiously enough frequently manage to have very pretty daughters, which is advantageous for a coach) and their families, after their kinds, and the medical man, after his kind. Then there are the people who have come to live at Fenchester, because all the above are to be found there, and imagine themselves part of a highly intellectual community, and go to lectures they do not understand, and wear double eye-glasses.

The students are many and various. They increase and multiply, and replenish the town, and do their best, in spite of proctor and police, to subdue it. Some of them have from time to time, as the centuries passed, attained to great eminence; many have not. They live their three or four years out—work, play, waste, gather, enjoy, run, row, read, sing, smoke, drink, cut chapels, get "proctorised," write poetry and fall in love every May regularly, "come up," "go down," and finally "go out," or try to, or are "sent down" prematurely; and then another couple of thousands take their places, and tread out the same mill, grind the same wheat and tares, and go their ways, each and all with the remembrance of a unique experience. I suppose ants really are different one from another, and have different experiences, when looked at from the ant point of view. So with undergraduates. A gate-porter, or a proctor, or dean, or a *viva-voce* inquisitor probably finds them alike, with a wearisome iteration. But each knows what a very exceptional and original person he really is, though he outwardly may conform to the rule of dressing, behaving, and talking and walking exactly like every one else, of having a red (or green) tablecloth like every one else, and (nowadays) Japanese screens, a dado and etchings like every one or nearly every one else.

It is not difficult to get cheap fun out of them, perhaps, and their curious little superstitions and habits, but they have a pleasanter part of life there than they or we, you and I, ever will get again. Nearly all have youth and health; many have money, and some have brains. And they have several years of leisure and opportunity to enjoy all these in a comfortable place with a copious supply of acquaintances, and every possible means of indulging in the exquisite pleasure of complete irresponsibility, supported on good food and exercise.

I think if I were given a chance of making one of those delightful bargains with the devil which were so frequent in the Middle Ages (and in which the devil was so often and so shamelessly swindled by the human parties to the contract, who could generally "give him pints," as Colonel Shute would say, in most kinds of iniquity), I would stipulate that I should be an undergraduate of the second year, with plenty of money, plenty of undisputed illusions, the conceit, appetite, and digestion of twenty-two, my examination always a year ahead, and a set of large old rooms in the great red, ivy-grown quadrangle of Audit College, Fenchester, for a thousand years.

I should accumulate a great many beautiful and comfortable things in that time. After a century or two the vulgar, new, and garish furniture of the tasteless yesterday would become the old, artistic, and fashionable penates of the cultured to-day. Think of the wine and cigars kept for, say, three hundred years undisturbed! When the thousand years were over I would become a fellow, a resident fellow, and drink that wine and smoke those cigars, and write for the monthly reviews, and be well paid for it. This bargain includes a permanent bedmaker aged sixty, always kind, clean, and capable, and an intelligent, honest, sober man-servant aged forty. Then I would be given an honorary degree for my distinguished work in the field (why "field"?) of science, literature, or art; I do not care which, say all three; and retire. Then the devil could make me a solicitor in London in the nineteenth century if he liked, or anything else he thought equally operative as unqualified Tartarus on me. But this may be regarded as mere trifling. To our tale.

One fine May afternoon, in the kind of weather lady novelists like to describe as glorious, a young man (who ought to have been reading hard, with a cup of tea and a pipe, for his examination) was escorting one elderly lady and three young ones through the gate of Audit College, and expatiating with pride on the beauties of that noble foundation. The gateway is of brick, mellowed by age from scarlet to a deep, dull red, and fringed with long trails of dark ivy. It is four-square, with a turret at each corner.

"It is beautiful," said one of the young ladies. "One expects to walk through it straight into the Middle Ages, and find people with rapiers, and doublets, and lutes, and daggers inside."



"You will see all those, except the doublets, in my rooms. I don't see anything more mediæval here than a cook's man with a tray on his head to-day, unless it be a bedmaker emptying slops into space. When they built the place drains were thought vanity and a dangerous deceit, so they made none. The place is therefore one of the healthiest residences in England."

"When was it built?" asked the elderly lady.

"It was founded by Cornelius Audit, sometime Bishop of Glastonbury, and first master, and endowed by the then reigning sovereign. I don't know who he was, or exactly when this happened. Then, at a later date, the place was added to by Lady Tabitha. I don't know why she added to it."

"Lady Tabitha who?"

"I don't know. We always call her Lady Tabitha. I suppose she had another name. That's her in the stiff petticoat on the right" (pointing to mighty quaint stone effigy on gate); "the middle one, with a crown on one side with a bird's nest in it, is the king."

"Which king?"

"I don't know. The king who endowed the place. The 'then reigning sovereign.' The smaller one on the left is Bishop Cornelius, unless he's Lady Tabitha and Cornelius is the other. I'd have got a guide-book and a ladder, and made sure, if I'd thought you would care to know."

"The college has turned out a great many geniuses through history, hasn't it?" asked the young lady who had first spoken.

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder if it turned me out, if I'm as shaky a month hence as I feel now. The Danish steelyard nearly finished me two or three years ago. You are not required to be a genius here; in fact, they are rather suspicious of them, so many used to get ploughed and throw discredit on the college, and then blossom out as celebrities afterwards; but in the matter of steelyards, Common Pumps, and chapels, they put their feet down firmly. That is not a Common Pump; it is a rather dodgy sundial. It is put here under the clock-tower, in order that it may be set right every Saturday with comparative ease. The men used to turn it round sometimes, which had a confusing effect, before it was rigidly attached to the pavement. On the right you observe the chapel. It was built in the eighteenth century, and carefully constructed of a different colour and style from the rest

of the place, of which, of course, eighteenth-century taste disapproved. Over the door you observe the pious inscription '*Domus mea domus orationis erit.*' Then it occurred to them they were rather putting their feet in it, so they didn't finish the verse, and left posterity to fill in the obvious part for themselves."

"It seems to me, Sandy, that you have learnt nothing here but misplaced flippancy," said the elder lady.

"Oh, I have learnt more than that, Mrs. Raynham. I can row, I can make outers and mags with a rifle, I can fence, I can play the guitar, I can dance breakdowns. I have passed my Little-go, which is one of the highest criteria of intellectual merit the place supplies. See, here are my rooms, and I think rest and tea will do you all good after your journey. If you want intellect and learning and all that you must get it out of Corsar. I've asked him to meet you. I think you will like him. Come in."

Sandy Maxwell's rooms were over the Bishop's Gate, a similar structure to the Great or King's Gate, though a trifle smaller, and decorated with no such statues. The second floor of this made a very comfortable apartment. It consisted of a large square room with a door at each corner. These doors led to the front turrets, the first containing the bed, the second the culinary and kindred apparatus, the third the private correspondence and other arcana of the owner; the fourth was merely a spiral stone staircase. There was a certain symmetry, a certain compact inclusiveness, reminding one of a mediæval castle on a small scale about this abode, which was very satisfactory. The room was lined with antique panelling, extending from floor to ceiling. The latter was crossed by huge black, irregularly cut beams. Such was its bare internal construction. Each temporary inhabitant, from the time of the Henrys, had stamped an ephemeral individuality on it, no doubt, by furniture and decoration, or the absence of one or both.

But I doubt if this room had ever found before so sympathetic a tenant, one who was so thoroughly in unison with the surroundings. I do not mean that he affected what is known as mediævalism; but he *was* mediæval to a large extent. His ethical convictions, his respect for physical force as the highest law, for proficiency in the use of it as the highest masculine quality, his admiration of woman's beauty, or rather of women for their beauty, his exaggerated devotion



to them and utter absence of any respect for them, his freedom from superstitious restraints, which he thought good to keep up among the lower orders, were none of them exactly characteristic of the nineteenth century.

It were exaggeration to say he was merely mediæval. He was the outcome of the roving intriguer of *Le Sage*, the gay and witty marquis of *Molière*, the gentleman adventurer of the Spanish main, and the amusing but unscrupulous gallant of the Restoration. At least he would like to have been, but for the fetters which nineteenth-century civilisation puts upon such laudable ambitions and picturesque tastes. If the practice were not prejudiced by the vulgar accessories after the fact of police magistrates and the Central Criminal Court, he would have killed men in single combat on the grass-plot of Audit College, skilfully and picturesquely, without the slightest compunction, and considered the action a feather in his cap, or a scalp to his belt, if the metaphor be preferred, at least, he thought he would.

He was quite capable of singing songs under some girl's window to a guitar by moonlight, and quite capable of growing tired of her, and saying a light-hearted good-bye as soon as he had won her affection, which latter he also could often do. For Sandy Maxwell was a good-looking fellow in a certain style, had magnificent physical proportions, not gigantic but symmetrical, good, even artistic, taste in dress, and a power of making himself agreeable when he chose to exert it. On this particular day he was rather dull and depressed, in spite of the fact that he was the escort and cicerone of three very pretty girls, who all were fresh to the place, and had that curiosity which is sometimes so pleasant to satisfy. As for everything else he was, and everything else he thought he was, we will let him show it for himself, as much as he thinks fit.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SANDY'S ROOMS.

“Mille objets—bons à rien, admirables à voir ;  
Caftans orientaux, pourpoints du moyen-âge,  
Rebecs, psaltérions, instruments hors d'usage.  
Un antre, un musée, un boudoir !”

THE leading ideas suggested by the contents of Sandy Maxwell's room were Love and War. For above the very comfortable semi-oriental and multi-coloured furniture, and the tightly if miscellaneously filled book-cases, hung or stood, in picturesque confusion, in disorder perhaps more artificial than artistic, scimitars, matchlocks, shields, pictures of strange, rare, and fanciful types of female beauty, rapiers, a lute, daggers, a guitar, pistols, foils, gloves, miniature Venuses of Milo, the Capitol, and elsewhere, which gave the character to the place of being a mixed shrine of Ares and Aphrodite. A glance, however, at the books would convince one that these were not quite the only tutelary deities. Athene and the Muses ought to have been pleased to find Spinoza and Kant (mostly uncut) flanking Victor Hugo (dog's-eared), and in the neighbourhood Haeckel, the Bible, Horace, Mill, De Musset, Euclid, Théophile Gautier, Thackeray, Dumas (on chemistry, on the art of being a musketeer, and on camellias), Dickens, Molière, Mark Twain, &c. There was much more than this which might be catalogued much in the same anarchic style. It may be added that Alexander Maxwell, of Audit College, Esquire, had read some pages of all these books, and all the pages of some of them.

He stood pouring out tea for his guests while they occupied themselves as ladies in such a room for the first time always do. Mrs. Raynham sat down and looked round, observing, “Dear me, you know sight-seeing is much more tiring than one thinks!” while the girls roamed about examining the “things,” pulling them about, trying the piano, sitting on

the different chairs to test their comfort, taking their gloves off and looking out of window at the great red court with its flower-fringed windows made gay for May.

May, by the way, was the name of the youngest Miss Raynham, and a very nice girl she was. As she sits in the window, in the attitude of one riding on a side-saddle, one arm round a stone mullion, the other in her lap, we cannot do better than look at her for a little while. It is always a wholesome and a soothing thing to look at a really nice girl. Not too long, or artistic admiration and gratitude to nature and evolution give way to envy, discontent, and even hatred—hatred for the persons who have (as we have not) the privilege (which they do not, of course, appreciate as we would) of constantly looking at her, of talking to her, of making her laugh, of “taking her out” maybe, or even of kissing her. When the last is too minutely reflected on we find ourselves skulking home to sharpen the assassin’s knife.

May Raynham has a small round head, now decorated with a large black felt hat, flexible as to brim, adorned with a black ostrich feather, and rather on one side, after the manner of a certain portrait of Van Dyck. As she now sits you catch the line of her forehead, cheek, chin, and jaw, and the little coiled knob of hair over the part known to the French as *nique*. (“Poll” suggests elections, taxes, and parrots, and if necks at all *men’s* necks). When she turns round you will have an opportunity of observing that her face is a little longer than you thought it would be, that her eyebrows are horizontal, her eyes a sort of grey—dark grey, honest-looking eyes (candid I think the proper word is), which look at you steadfastly, devoid of self-consciousness, her nose straight and slender, her mouth like that of a certain helmeted Minerva, with down-turned look, well known and frequently copied, and that her chin is rather pointed. Her hair is fair, with varying tones, and has a slight natural tendency to waviness, encouraged by occasional twisting and compression round a hair-pin. Her sisters were rather like her, but the character, piquancy, and attraction which made up the Raynham individuality reached their maxima in her. They were a little taller, a little fairer, and had not quite so much expression.

“Sandy, there’s a man coming up your stairs,” said May from her “Sister Anne” position. A knock came at the door.

“Come in !”

"Hullo, Sandy!—Oh! I beg your pardon."

"All right, Corsar, come in. Let me introduce, &c., &c." And he introduced duly. "Did you get my note?" asked Sandy.

"No; I haven't been to my rooms. I have just come from town. I came in here quite casually, not knowing——"

"All right. My note was only to explain the facts; I ask you to come. Have some tea?"

"Thanks. Is this your first visit to Fenchester?" asked Carl Corsar of the group generally.

Mrs. Raynham replied: "Yes; it is so interesting. We had never been in a university town before, and it is all so curious and picturesque."

"I like to see the caps and gowns," said May, still in the window seat. "I saw a small old man to-day in a red gown and a flat velvet hat with a gold cord round it, walking about the streets quite unconscious that there was anything the least funny about his appearance."

"Yes? Oh there are plenty of things here more ridiculous than the costumes. Some of the people who wear them, for instance."

"I like it; it is rather becoming to most, I think."

"What is?"

"The common cap and gown which the—the ones like Sandy wear, you know."

"The undergraduates? Oh, yes. Sandy looks very pretty in it, doesn't he? And he wears his cap at a tip-tilt over the left eye, which is held to be highly attractive; and having a gown slit up the back from the tails to the collar is also considered *distingué*."

"He is a sort of don, you know," said Sandy, "and has to be proper—at any-rate in public."

"What are you, Mr. Corsar—a professor?"

"Not quite. I am a bachelor of what is called arts. It means sciences in my case."

"What do you wear then?"

"I? A black gown with ribbon tails just here, which float out on the breeze on each side, so. The recent bachelor takes precautions that they shall so float—conspicuously."

"Isn't it like a girl," said Mrs. Raynham, "to care so much more what they wear here than what they do? I'm afraid May has not got the making of a student in her. By the way, there is a lady's college, isn't there?"



"Well, yes," said Carl; "but they don't fulfil the Tennysonian idyll at all. Everybody was wildly excited before they came, and the old dons prophesied long special trains full of elopers with special licences every week. The women arrived. Nothing happened, any more than if a flock of pigeons had alighted in a field. I lecture to some of them—and don't enjoy it."

"What do you lecture about, Mr. Corsar?" asked May.

"The harmless and peaceful branch of science called Botany. I have to take personally conducted tours round the gardens sometimes, and pull flowers to pieces."

"That must be rather nice, I should think," observed one of May's sisters; "much better than dissecting, or chemistry, or some of those nasty things some people enjoy so much."

"But don't you hate to pull flowers to pieces?" asked May; "when you have given names to the bits, you have nothing left to do but throw them away, or press them in a book, which is only another way of throwing them away. Do the dead names give you more satisfaction than the live flowers?"

"In the first place," said Corsar, "what gives me most satisfaction is the prosaic fact that pulling vegetables to pieces is to me a source of income. Secondly, if you saw some of the dissected flowers I have seen under the microscope, you would allow that cutting them up was justified—æsthetically I mean—by the results made visible. Thirdly, it can surely never be wrong to increase knowledge—especially among people such as undergraduates, who haven't much."

"Don't be personal, old man!" said Sandy; "it isn't so long since you were an undergraduate yourself, you know."

"Isn't it? Well, I suppose it isn't. It seems so though."

"Well, yes," said May, who was not in the habit of having her opinions disputed, especially by young men, and respected Corsar in proportion, "I admit that I was rather laying down the law on things I didn't understand. I shall remember by-and-by that I am in a place where everybody is supposed to know something."

"Don't take that for granted, Miss Raynham. There are a good many here whose only quality is a vast incapacity for knowing anything. And they are quite happy too."

"Will you dine here with us by-and-by?" asked Sandy of Carl Corsar.

"Well, no thanks; I'm afraid I can't do that. I've got a



procession of pupils coming from five till eleven, with an hour's interval for 'hall;' and I must be off now for the first, I'm very sorry; I'd like to stay here much longer. Perhaps I shall see you to-morrow, Mrs. Raynham?"

"We are to be taken to the races to-morrow, I believe."

"Ah, yes; but that is in the evening. Won't you come and lunch with me in the afternoon?" Mrs. Raynham looked dubiously at her daughters and at Sandy.

"I'm sure," she began, "it's extremely kind of you Mr. Corsar——"

"But you're awfully busy," said May, "and we shall be an undisguised plague. We shan't know exactly when to go, and you won't like to turn us out, and——"

"Oh, yes, I will; I'll tell you exactly when to go, if that's your difficulty."

"It's all right," said Sandy, "I'll bring 'em along. What time?"

"Two, if you don't mind. I don't think I can get away from the laboratory before. Thanks. Well, I shall expect you all at two."

When Corsar was gone, Mrs. Raynham said, "Now that's very kind of him, and to complete strangers too, isn't it?"

"Hospitality seems the rule here," said Miss Raynham, the eldest of the three. "I think every friend of yours you've introduced, Sandy, has asked us to some meal."

"Yes; you see that gives them an excuse for walking about with you afterwards in public places; and any man who hasn't got people of his own up likes to be seen about with some other man's, especially under certain circumstances which, being no flatterer, I will not detail. You see it gives them no trouble; they order lunch, or breakfast, or whatever it is, and the kitchen, the gyp, and the bedmaker settle it between them."

"You needn't attribute low motives to your friends' civility in that horrid way," said May; "we shall simply put it down to feelings which, being no flatterer, I will detail—to wit, jealousy."

"That's right, sit on me. You've got a live don, captured by your bow and spear, and now you spurn the humble instrument who brought him into your range."

"Now that for you is almost vulgar. Suppose you do something to amuse us now you've got us here."

"What would you like to do ? Play whist ? Box ? Dance while Kate plays the piano ? If she will be so kind, or if some one will, I don't mind giving you a sword-dance, or a hornpipe, or a cachuca, if I may go and put on my flannels. That would be very pretty, I can assure you."

"You might teach me some of these accomplishments. Now I've had tea, I want to do something ; I want to do some mischief preferably. I think I'll have a lesson in boxing."

"All right ; nothing easier. Here are gloves ; you can hit me, and I'll give instructions."

After about five minutes of this amusement, in which May hit viciously and put herself quite out of breath without ever touching her skilful and cat-like adversary, she gave in, saying it was much too hot, and plied a fan—Sandy's, not her own—vigorously in the window-seat, and remarked, "You are so provoking, you move your head about so that I can't hit you ; I'm sure that can't be fair. We will sit still and talk."

Sandy took off her gloves and his own with a pleased grin. He was not a bad-looking fellow, Sandy, though he had not the beauty and regularity of face which marked out Carl Corsar among other men. He had a queer, knowing, rather *retroussé* face, something after the style of M. Grevin's Parisian young men of fashion, with light brown hair, a low wide forehead, grey eyes, rather sunken and bistred, but keen and humorous, a wide mouth, with a slight, wandering attempt at a moustache over it, and a good deal of jaw. There was just a trifle of the cat about that face ; but it was an attractive one. His body was symmetrical and powerful—perhaps a little heavy, but in all his movements it might be observed that he fell into the most natural and mechanically appropriate attitude for the purpose, apparently without effort, whether it were for drawing a cork or teaching May Raynham to box. That is a very good criterion of physical perfection. And Sandy could, as he said, row, run, dance, shoot, fence, play tennis, and box, and all of them very well.

"Now, who is this Mr. Corsar ?" asked Mrs. Raynham.

"I thought we made that clear between us. He is a lecturer and coach on botany, took a scientific first in final honours, and has a very good chance of being the next science fellow."

"Oh, yes, I know ; but I mean where does he come from, and who are his relations ?"

"He comes from London. I know very little about his people. He has a father alive, who doesn't seem much good to him, and has for money what he earns."

"Oh, I see."

Mrs. Raynham evidently felt that—almost justifiable—maternal distrust usually provoked by good-looking young men who are clever and have no money, except, as Sandy said, what they earn. Perhaps it would be better, from her point of view, if he had earned less and been naturally endowed with more.

"I suppose he is not likely to get very much here, even as fellow?" she said.

"Three or four hundred a year. But he doesn't want to be rich, I don't think. He won't earn a penny more than he wants. Nature cut him out to enjoy life; it's only necessity which would ever make him work. But when he recognises necessity he *can* work. I wish I could say as much."

"You don't know who his father is? It's an uncommon name."

"His father lives in Jermyn Street, and belongs to the Idlers' Club; that's aristocratic and expensive enough."

"Uncle Waller belongs to the Idlers," said May; "he has it on his cards."

"I know he does; I've seen him coming out of it."

## CHAPTER V.

### CYRUS SHUTE BECOMES A MILLIONAIRE.

MR. JAMES CORSAR and Colonel Shute dined as per programme. The former ordered the dinner and the latter paid for it. When they had finished they went down-stairs into the café portion of the restaurant to smoke cigarettes and drink coffee at their ease. Happening to find a portion of the room free from clients who might lend a too willing ear to their conversation, they selected a small table there and sat at it. They were both in evening dress. The Colonel was very fine, but perhaps a little too much the youthful dandy. It is difficult to look conspicuous or garish in the black uniform of male society called "dress," but Cyrus Shute almost mastered the difficulty. His "bosom-jewel," as he called it, was of several rather unsympathetic stones, and was large. His sleeve solitaires were also large, and represented some strange pastoral romance in bold relief. They were constructed of the finest Black Gulch gold, and probably served as paperweights when not applied to their normal use. The "revers" of his coat were silk—dark blue silk—and tucked carelessly in between the shirt and very low-cut white waistcoat with pink coral buttons was a silk handkerchief of rich crimson.

When all this stood up, surmounted by a curly-brimmed Gibus hat, somewhat canted over one eye, the world wondered, the beggars said "My lord," which pleased Cyrus, and the waiters displayed outward Oriental reverence and experienced inward scornful doubts. They had experience, these pale, polite, frigid, rigid, expressionless waiters, of all sorts and conditions of men—no one more. They had seen gorgeous young swells removed, like the late Mr. Aram, "with gyves upon their wrists," by cynical-looking members of the Criminal Investigation Department before now, while in the act of standing champagne to a select circle of acquaintances. They



had occasionally noticed that some of the most aristocratic looking customers would disappear for periods of five, seven, or perhaps even fourteen years, and reappear somewhat worn, thin, and grizzled, stating they had been yachting for the good of their health. They remembered, too, how that the man who now occupied his spare moments in exercising a broom outside in the street, and saying, "Keb or kerridge, sir?" had once stood in gorgeous raiment at their buffet and "shouted" iced Heidsieck to a company of verdant young gentlemen from a highly exclusive university club. Yes, they knew several facets of the many-angled and far from translucent crystal of London life, did the waiters, and their verdict was that the black-moustached and resplendent American was "cracked in the ring," and that the quiet, handsome, iron-grey Englishman of what police reports call "gentlemanly appearance," who had such excellent taste in food and wine, was probably occupying the rôle of pigeon to the other's hawk. Even waiters are fallible.

"Shute," said Mr. Corsar, leaning back and crossing his feet.

"Sir to you," replied the other, chewing a big cigar in the corner of his mouth.

"I think you had better be a millionaire."

"I want to be; it is a profession which has bin the dream of my youth and the aim of my matoorer manhood. I would shine in it and do it credit. Hand me the million and try me; money returned if result unsatisfactory."

"I mean you had better be one at once; it will make a good impression on society. Cyrus Shute, the well-known Western mine king, is now on a visit to England. The description of his residence in San Francisco sounds like a realisation of the 'Arabian Nights.' It is said that he gave ten thousand pounds for a Japanese tea-set at the Hotel Drouot, the property of the late Henry of Navarre. Do you follow me?"

"I see you, and go better. The celebrated financial phenomenon, Cyrus Shute, whose already colossal fortune was but recently increased by the bustin' in of the Magellan Railway Boom, is about to record his gratitude to the country for whose institootions he has so pro-found a regyard, whose hospitality to him, while a Secesh refugee, he will never forget, by building a free-school, or free bar, or free boarding-house, or founding a bishopric, if you like, in the densely populated



eastern home of the industrious poor of this great city. Do you see me? Peabody out of it, Astor nowhere."

"Yes, and I think I can go better; I can get you paragraphed."

"Your bluffin' was always more reelly artistic. You must do that before you quit out of here. Out of England, I mean."

"Good; we will begin to-night. Come to my club; we will see what can be done there."

They left the restaurant, and walked slowly down Piccadilly. Outside a ragged old man on crutches begged of them, and they heard the wooden pegging on the pavement behind them, and the piteous beggar's whine as they negligently strolled along.

"Hang that fellow, I wish he would go," said Mr. Corsar; "I hate that sort of thing. I don't like to be followed by a cripple. I'm fated to have lame beggars pegging after me, I think, whenever I go into Piccadilly. And it would be cruel to give him in charge."

"Specially for people who don't want to have their physiognomies paraded through a London police-court, and taken notice of by dog-derned detectives. Here, infirm one!"

"My lord!"

"Here's haf-a-dollar. Now git."

"Lord bless you, my lord, and make your sleep softer."

"Thank you. Good night."

And they walked on to the club. And the pegging grew fainter and fainter behind them. As they turned in at the door, Mr. Corsar turned round.

"There's that infernal cripple selecting this street to beg in now."

And they went in. The beggar stood at the door and saw them enter.

The Idlers' Club is not a very old or a very exclusive club, but it is fashionable; and well-known leaders of society, whose names are familiar to the pen of the paragraphist, belong to it. It has no political tone, except that matter-of-course, unquestioning, and undiscussed Conservatism which is natural to people who have anything to conserve, such as their position, their money, and their irresponsibility for the use they make of either. The loudest and Toriest of the Tories among the Idlers are the members who have been

stockbrokers, or have belonged to some profession with an artistic taint about it. These last try to look as if they had completely forgotten—in fact never knew—where the Strand was, or what the sensation of having a cardboard rectangle at the end of a watch-chain was like.

The high subscription and entrance-fee keep the club very select. There are members of the hereditary legislature among its members, as well as one bishop. A king of one of the less important European States is an honorary vice-president. There is a dash, too, of the Embassy and "F.O." element about it. Several highly connected young university men belong to it, as well as some very affluent, beautifully-dressed young Israelites, who carry scent on their handkerchiefs, and talk in a lordly way about the rashness of admitting "any infernal Jews" into the place to lower its tone. Besides all these and many more, Mr. James Corsar belonged to it, which is a recommendation in itself.

That gentleman inscribed Colonel Cyrus Shute's name in the visitors' book, and conducted him to the smoking-room, where a few gentlemen were sitting and standing, reading and conversing. A very worthy and imposing addition to the crowd Mr. Corsar made, with his perfect ease and grace and becoming evening dress, and his pale, calm, and Napoleonic beauty, which required gaslight and such a good dinner as he had had to give it its full effect.

"Now, what will you take, Colonel?" said he blandly; "here you begin to be guest, you know. Shall we say a liqueur?"

"Call it Chartrooze—green." ("I prefer to call it Chartreuse," thought Mr. Corsar.) Aloud he said—

"Waiter, two green Chartreuse and two cigars. You know the ones I always smoke."

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Corsar looked round, and calmly—quite without self-consciousness—faced the others present, who were scanning him and friend with polite curiosity, as if in search of some one. He found just then no one he knew, except distantly. To these he smiled and bowed in a charming manner. Colonel Cyrus was not so much at his ease. The very evident "high tone" of the place, the quiet richness of the style of decoration, the perfect ease and "at home" look of the members (who, for aught he knew, might be real dukes), the impassive,

polite curiosity of their expression, imposed on the simple Western mind fresh from the balmy out-door air of the Pacific slopes, and the balmy bar-room air of Sam Costa's; and he felt almost shy, and envied Corsar his well-bred ease. The Criterion was all very well. There people stared and could be stared back at, waiters could be chaffed and treated to drinks, and there were barmaids. But this was different.

"I never was in a church," said he afterwards, "but once, and that was after the sack of Peterborough, on which occasion the chivalrous Secesher was totally demoralised. I was on the winnin' side there, and we pick-nicked in the Episcopal church. But in a peaceful way I never was in a church. If I was, I guess I ought to feel as I did when you took me into that cam aoristocratic crowd at your club, pardner."

After about half-an-hour, during which Mr. Corsar described London beautifully for the benefit of his foreign friend and other listeners, dwelling with a mixture of humour and pathos on the peculiarities of the extreme parties in the political world, the state of art, the theatres, the society papers, and the Poor, skimming gracefully over all these topics with the practised ease of a smart leader-writer, with little illustrative and piquant anecdotes put in at intervals, Colonel Shute, who had only been called upon at intervals to say "Haow?" and "Why, is that possible?" and to do that crooked wrinkle of his sallow cheek which counted for a laugh, began to feel more at his ease. One thing troubled him. He wanted to spit, but seeing no one else do so was afraid to. The only time on which his mouth was seen to screw itself into a preparatory tube-shape, the expression which momentarily passed over Mr. Corsar's face warned him. He was very sharp at taking a hint.

"Ah!" said Mr. Corsar at last, "here is a man I want you to know," as a middle-aged, bulky, shaven-faced man, with small hands and feet, of which he was evidently proud, entered the room, followed by another man like him, but older and thinner, and with a more intellectual face.

"How do, Corsar?" said the first comer, in a rich plummy voice, and a tendency to pronounce his r's like w's; "how do?"

"Glad to see you," said Mr. Corsar. "I have a friend here who is a stranger in our country, and wishes to obtain information on British society, art, and statesmanship. I told



him I couldn't do better than introduce him to you, didn't I, Shute?"

Cyrus arose. "That is so," he said.

Mr. Corsar then said, "Let me introduce Mr. Waller Raynham, member of Parliament for South Dirlshire; Colonel Cyrus Shute, from the United States.

Mr. Waller Raynham beamed and bowed.

Colonel Shute protruded his powerful and solid hand, and seized Mr. Waller Raynham's small and white one, saying, "Very glad to meet *you*, Mr. Waller Raynham."

Then Mr. Waller Raynham said, "Let me in my turn introduce my brother, Mr. John Raynham; Mr. Corsar, Colonel Shute." All bowed.

"I have long wished to know you, sir," remarked Cyrus mendaciously to Waller; "you are the first British statesman I have met. May I ask if you are in the present Cabinet?"

"Well, no, Colonel Shute, no. The fact is the other party is in power just now."

"Ah, you belong to the old aristocratic and constitutional crowd. I might a' guessed that."

"Yes. I am afraid you, as a Republican, will rather look down on us, eh?"

"On the contrary, I as a Democrat respect you, sir. I tell you," he added in a low voice, of course audible to the whole room, and intended to be, "that I gained my commission fighting for the poor old South, among the descendants of your Gentlemen Adventurers and your Cavaliers, sir. I represent a lost cause. You may yet win yours."

"Dear me! dear me! Well, I'm sure I'm delighted to make your acquaintance. I remember well when the Civil War was going on, the great heart of England was with you."

"It was." "The great brain of England wasn't," Cyrus parenthetically thought.

"And except for the demagogic extravagance of a few fanatics who would fain cry 'Peace! peace!' when there is not and should not be any peace, we might have given you material assistance, instead of humbling and disgracing ourselves, as we have done, with that wretched *Alabama* compensation. Were you an owner of much property in the South, if I may ask?"

"I was so. I lost my ancestral estate in Virginia, consisting of cotton clumps, forests primeval, and niggers, and had



to wander around the earth, accepting menial occupations for the sake of mere bread and cheese and whisk—er—water."

"Dear me!"

"Rough diamond, rough diamond," whispered Mr. Corsar to Mr. John Raynham, "but a brave, honest, tender-hearted creature as ever breathed."

Mr. John Raynham looked at the honest, tender-hearted creature.

"Indeed!" he said.

"Yes, and a man who, in his own homely Western phrase, has 'got the sand.' After losing all his vast property, he has now in the course of years, by sheer pluck and energy, become even richer than he was before."

Mr. John Raynham looked more respectfully than before at Cyrus Shute, warrior, ruined slave-holder, and millionaire.

"He tells me—but he does not wish it to be made known—that he is going to devote large sums of money to the improvement of the condition of the London poor (who, God knows, want it badly enough) out of gratitude to the hospitality he once met with as a destitute exile in England."

"Does he? By Jove, I honour him for that."

And John Raynham took a far greater interest in Colonel Shute than ever. John Raynham respected wealth because he knew what an omnipotence for good and evil it is and has been throughout the world, but he respected philanthropy more. It may be a weakness on his part, especially in a man who had made his fortune in business, but John Raynham loved and pitied his fellow-men, knowing that while he as one prospered a million were in abject misery. And many a stealthy well-judged or ill-judged kindness had he done to those whose need of kindness was great, as a small thank-offering for his own possession of loving and comely children, a comfortable home, and a large income. And in the course of the evening he came to the conclusion that Colonel Shute, though perhaps uncultured, was a thoroughly good fellow, unassuming, and possessed of a "fund of dry humour."

Waller, who imagined himself a sort of combination of D'Orsay, Disraeli, and Canning, absorbed the gentle flattery of Corsar and the direct simple admiration of the American with vivid delight, and invited the pair to dinner the following evening. He asked his brother to come too, but the latter excused himself, saying—

"I have to run down to Fenchester to-morrow afternoon to meet my wife and daughter, who are there under the charge of young Maxwell, my wife's nephew. By the way, Mr. Corsar, there is a young fellow there of your name whom young Maxwell speaks of often in terms of the greatest friendship and admiration, can he be a relation of yours? It is an unusual name."

"Mr. Raynham, that is my son. I am very glad to have met you at all, but still more so having found you have a youngster there who is a friend of my youngster. I should like to meet this young Mr. Maxwell; I am always anxious to know my boy's friends. It is such a criterion of a young man's character, his choice of friends."

"Very true. I hope we may all meet, both generations, one of these days."

"I hope to —— you won't," reflected Mr. Corsar. Then aloud, "Yes. It is a cheering thing for us old fellows—I beg your pardon, Mr. Raynham, I mean for an old fellow like me, to see the young men growing up and flourishing, and enjoying themselves in a healthy way, as they do down there at Audit."

"I understand your son took a very distinguished degree?"

"I am not too modest to say he did, and that I am proud of him."

"Congratulate you, I'm sure. This boy Maxwell is a fine fellow and clever, but a little wild. He is inclined to forget that he is not as rich as some of his companions."

"We did not always think at their age, Mr. Raynham, did we? We must make allowances, mustn't we?"

"At eighteen," remarked Waller, "I was a very wild dog, I fear."

"At eighteen," added the Colonel, "I was carrying a rifle and riding a horse under General Robert Lee." At the mention of this name, Cyrus gently raised his hat.

"Ah, Colonel," said Mr. John Raynham, "we have not all your experiences."

"Thank your stars for that, sir," was the reply.

"I was going to say," the other continued, turning to Mr. Corsar, "that this young Maxwell" (D——n this young Maxwell! thought Mr. Corsar, with the expression of polite interest) "is no blood relation of mine. He is my wife's

nephew, has no parents, has a very small fortune, and I don't know exactly what to do with him."

"Ah! exactly. It's a nice point. Being myself a poor man, I told my boy at the outset he would have to work for his living, and he has done it right well."

"Well, good-night, gentlemen," said Waller, "I have to go to my chambers and write an article on foreign policy. I shall see you to-morrow?"

"I thank you," said Colonel Shute.

"*Au revoir*, then!" said Mr. Corsar pleasantly, and he and his "pardner" strolled into St. James's Street.

"Now who is Waller Raynham, anyhow?" asked Shute.

"He is a fool."

"Yes, I know that. But further?"

"He is an M.P. and has the *entrée* of a great many exclusive circles, and has the talent of spreading all over London whatever he hears."

"Then he is to spread me?"

"Exactly. And mind, he is as vain as a peacock about his statesmanship, his wit, and the article on foreign policy he is always writing, which no one ever sees, or ever will."

"I see."

"Good-night, my lord, God bless you!"

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Cyrus; "there's that blamed cripple again."

"I suppose he selects this as a likely place for charity just at this time. Sure to meet men coming into or out of clubs. I shouldn't wonder if he picked up a good deal."

## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRELIGHT, TOBACCO, AND GLOOM.

"HERE'S a paper for you to take away," said Carl Corsar to the last of his pupils for the night, at 11 P.M., for whose sake he had left Sandy's rooms at five, strongly against his will; "do as much as you can of it. Do it from the book. It's no use your trying to answer those questions out of your head yet. It will only get you into the habit of writing wrong answers. Let's see, then I shall see you again at ten, day after to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"All right, good-night."

The pupil left, and shut the door of the set of attic rooms, and Carl Corsar got up and began putting books and papers away with much neatness in a set of shelves he had made himself. Out of common and cheap materials, and with his own delicate and ingenious hands, he had made his rooms the picture of comfort and practical convenience, though without any seeking after artistic effect. Everything was good of its kind. There was nothing he did not occasionally require, and everything in frequent use was where he could readily lay hands on it. Books, papers, tobacco, hats, microscope, matches, pens, &c., were within easy reach, with the result of apparent chaos, but superlative convenience. The chairs and tables were strictly arranged for comfort and applicability to their respective purposes, without regard to appearance. There were no decorations, no pictures save two or three large photographs of favourite professors, and over the chimney-piece one magnificent etched portrait of the man he revered above all others of the nineteenth century, Charles Darwin.

And under that portrait Carl stood, waiting for his kettle to boil, and smoking a slender short wooden pipe black with age as he waited, his hands in the pockets of white flannel



trousers, his body clothed in a blue flannel coat, known to boating men as a Blazer. His face was, as has been said, like that of his father, but fairer, and his hair instead of being iron grey was light brown and brushed back away from his forehead and cut short. His features and expression were certainly marvellously attractive and keen. Sandy grandly put it that Carl's face had the regularity of Napoleon's, with the meagreness of Cæsar's. As a matter of fact he had keen blue eyes set wide apart, a pronounced aquiline nose, a mouth which some ladies called "singularly sweet," and a thin and bony but splendidly shaped jaw. And behind this face there was plenty of head to hold brains.

Whatever he set himself to do with that head and those hands, which worked so well together, he did, and did well. Many and wonderful were the things he would make. He delighted in making things. He made a wonderful apparatus for warming his bath by the latent heat of steam out of a few tin plates and leaden tubes. If the kettle leaked he mended it. He made a fishing rod, a set of drawers for pressed plants, and a case for microscope slides, in a way which would have been a lesson to many a professional artificer. He was steadily practical and sternly real, and young men who wrote passionate poetry and belonged to Asphodel clubs, spouted dandified socialism at debating societies, and adorned their rooms with dados, were as much an abomination to him as the apostolic don and dean who thought that human beings who were not at lecture or dinner should be in chapel, or the far from apostolic senior fellow of the old school who held that persons not at chapel or lecture should be in hall at dinner, especially senior fellows.

Luminaries of these kinds regarded Corsar as a rising iconoclast, a natural though highly objectionable result of the Abolition of Tests. He was destined, no doubt, to turn the chapel into a dissecting theatre, to pervert surplices to profane uses, and to abolish entirely those senior fellows whose main duty and privilege consisted in eating the very excellent dinners provided for them at the high table. He and his chief, Professor McBean, an import from the advanced and fiery North, had already set the stone mightily rolling, and promulgated the audacious doctrine that some colleges demanded more than they supplied, were entirely human institutions, and as such subject to imperfections.

After holding forth seriously and sadly on these things in Hall during the intervals of a copious repast, it was instructive to observe the New Light rush like a large black bat to his attics, undrape and disarray himself, plunge into the (home-made) rocking-chair, put kettle on coals, light slender black pipe, and say, perhaps, "I say, Sandy, have you read 'Jack Sheppard'?" Carl's literary tastes had not grown up with his other intellectual attainments. He had not much time for leisure reading, and when he had usually confined himself to sensation novels, French and English, comic papers, and American humourists—all good things, no doubt, but limited in range. The "higher lights"—Shakespeare, Beethoven, Raphael, *e.g.*—simply bored him.

"When you're not working," he said, "you want some awful rubbish that doesn't require any mental effort to enjoy, or else you get no rest. Of course I could get to like all the big things if I tried; anybody could if he had time and brains, I dare say, but I can't be bothered. If I go to a theatre, I should certainly prefer *Madame Angot* to *Hamlet*."

And so he stood while his kettle boiled. As that useful machine seemed to be in no hurry, he sat down before a small rather tuneless piano he had bought at some sale, and played the Bell Chorus from the *Cloches de Corneville*. Then he took out his pet white rat, Juliet, from her box, sat down on the hearthrug and remarked to her with a queer smile playing round his thin handsome lips—

"I wonder if one will always be a baby? What do you think, Juliet? Do you know that I am your nurse? I think I ought to have one myself. I used to have one myself, but that is a long time ago."

When Sandy Maxwell came up to College, Carl discovered in him a man who, although very different from himself, had certain common sympathies with him, and certain similar views on the philosophy of things in general. Sandy's romance and impulse counterbalanced Carl's stern materialism. Both knew something of men and women in a way other than that of the majority of young men who surrounded them. The difference was that Sandy thought he would like to know more of them, while Carl thought he would not. They had made acquaintance as "coach" and pupil at a period when an ephemeral passion for science had entered into Sandy's comprehensive and versatile programme.

By the time Carl's kettle had boiled and his cocoa been made, that gentleman had joined him, having rambled over, as was his habit about this time, for a smoke and talk before going to bed. These smokes and talks generally lasted till about half-past midnight, when Carl began to prepare lecture notes and specimens for the morrow. The two sat before the fire in comfortable attitudes and smoked and drank cocoa for some minutes in silent gloom, staring into the glowing coals. At last Carl said—

"See anything special in that fire?"

"Curse it all!" replied Sandy, suddenly getting up and walking about the room, and as suddenly re-seating himself.

"I say, you know!"

"What's the matter?"

"I have had everything in the way of chances to make me happy, and I feel simply in a state of maudlin gloom."

"How's your exam. getting on?"

"Oh dash the exam.! That's all right. I feel safe enough. It's not that."

"What is it?"

"I can't help feeling that my existence here has been an infernal failure. I've got a tolerably good opinion of myself, as you know; and a magnificent ideal of what a man ought to be"—here Sandy glanced wistfully at Carl, who was gravely chewing large mouthfuls of bread and butter—"and a proportionate disappointment at my personal inability to attain it."

"I never have any ideals. If I want to have or do a thing, I have or do it, if I can; if not, I have something else."

"But you always can do whatever you want, hang you!"

"I used to think that. I tell you what it is, old man, I've come to the conclusion one can't have everything one likes."

"Well?"

"The alternative which appears to me to have points about it is: Like what you can have."

"That's all very well for a profane evolutionist like you, who believes in what he touches."

"Oh! how about you? How much of the intangible do you believe in?"

"I don't feel things or do them the same way. I've immense romantic capacities in me somewhere; but then just look at the way things have gone! I'm not weak enough to



blame luck. I know it's my own look-out; but look what I might be doing now! The dear old governor when he was alive taught me all he knew, which was a good deal, about men and women, and then sent me into Wanderleben with a good education and allowance to find them out for myself."

"Lucky beggar!"

"Just so. Well, I've been at two universities for a short time. I come here, chock full of ideas and books, meaning to be a fellow at least in no time. I take a classic exhibition. Then I yield to your fascinations, and mess with needles and forceps and microscopes and common frogs and elementary biology, and also muddle with Kant and Locke and Bacon."

"And eggs."

"Shut up! Then I row, and go target-shooting in an ugly grey uniform, just because my friends want me to. For the same reason I belong to two or three societies which cost me money, don't amuse me, and obstruct my reading, as they *all* meet in my rooms some days in the week, I think, and drink gallons of coffee; and now I'm trusting to a good memory and a brilliant imagination to scramble anyhow into a second-hand bachelor's gown, and shake the dust of the place from my feet for ever. What is still more provoking is that you can do and enjoy all these things just as much as I can, and succeed in your work into the bargain. And therefore I curse you solemnly, as that is nicer than cursing myself."

"Thanks. But if you knew as much as I know about myself, I don't know that you would envy me much."

Sandy looked at Carl curiously.

"Hum. At any rate you are not the rolling stone that I seem to have become. Why, you know, I don't even get seriously in love. I believe I have the capacity for a grand passion in me, but it is getting frittered away distributively in different places."

"Well, I think there are some points about the distributive style. I think one can get a good deal more fun out of it. In some respects the passion that overmasters one is distinctly inferior, and makes one play the consummate and utter fool."

"You speak with decision."

"I do."

"Have you—er—grounds for the conviction?"



"I have." Carl smoked sombrely for a minute or two, and then continued, "Fact is, I was left to take care of myself too early. Just fifteen is not the proper time for a fellow to be left to go on the loose. Luckily, I hadn't any spare pocket-money to throw about, or I should be in a better position to sympathise with you. I have always to work hard to get about three hundred a year, and you can't get much riotous living out of that. I work, of course, at the subjects I like best; that's the only way."

"And, by Jove! you have made them pay."

"Built a small structure out of nothing. But by a prolonged and beastly grind. Do you suppose I enjoy a monotonous series of more or less idiotic pups who make me loathe almost my own pet subjects? I should think an actor must find even a really good part rather mean by the four hundredth night. I amuse myself sometimes."

"Oh, you do!"

"You needn't grin. When I get the chance. Here, by way of rest, I just lie on the sofa and read the utterest rot in the way of literature that one just laughs and smokes over, when I can't get up to town. I'm having a great bender on sensation novels just now."

"Come and take a stroll in the quad."

"No; must do some work now, and then go to bed."

Here an interruption was occasioned by the discovery that Juliet had crawled inside the piano, and her extrication was a work of time, perspiration, and profanity on Carl's part. Like most men engaged much in biological pursuits, Carl was extremely fond of and very kind to animals, though he could have done a vivisection with a cool head and steady hand, had it lain in his career to do so. Juliet was reproved—Carl held her up, shook one finger at her, and said "Naughty!"—and carried to her box, and there inclosed. Then Carl said—

"What are you going to do in the long?"

"Going home—Watermouth, Raynham's place. I say, do come with me, old man, will you? We can amuse you for a week or two, I dare say, and cheer each other at dead of night with mutual melancholy and much tobacco. I wish you would come."

Carl looked wistful.

"You're very kind. I have to look over a lot of papers next week. Will after that do?"

"Anything will do, but come."

"Thanks very much. I'll try. I think you ought to go to bed now. I fancy one does a little too much of this sitting up and smoking. Pay for it some day. Fancy us two in Bath chairs with locomotor ataxy!"

"Won't fancy anything of the sort. Good night."

"Good night. Lunch to-morrow, mind!"

"Right."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CRUISE OF A SUNBEAM.

CARL CORSAR had asked one guest to meet the Raynhams at lunch, and he was young Arthur Raynham, a freshman at Audit, a pupil of Carl's, and son of a deceased Raynham, brother to John and Waller. Arthur was in consequence cousin to May and her sisters, and quasi-cousin to Sandy, who good-naturedly tolerated him. Carl rather liked the boy; not that he was at all likely to turn out a scientific prodigy, but he was good-tempered and tractable, always behaved like a gentleman, and had a certain limited sense of humour of his own. Unlike his uncle Waller, he was no politician, nor had he taken up any of the popular intellectual fads of young men at Fenchester. He was no poet or prose writer, nor could he even be legitimately called a prose-talker, unless the language with which England is constantly being enriched by her younger sons may be called prose. We, who hold to the ancient and yet respectable notion that subject, predicate, grammar, and general intelligibility are necessary to constitute the most simple prose, deny that Arthur Raynham talked it as a rule, though when he did he was certainly, like a well-known Frenchman, unaware of the fact.

But he was a nice, laughing kind of boy when he forgot the dignity and the deep voice necessary to his position, and could row and play games rather well, though he couldn't pass an examination to save his life. He had a pretty fair face, reminding one slightly of May, though without her distinctness and variety of expression. He always dressed in the height of the fashion, and imprisoned his really small and well-shaped feet in the tightest and sharpest-pointed boots, and did his best to ruin his excellent appetite and digestion by taking brandies and sodas and sherries and bitters he did not in the least like or want, and because the other "men" did it.

He was in abject bondage to Fenchester tradesmen (who are allowed to be among the most upright, candid, and unselfish of their profession), into buying wines and cigars of whose flavours and brands he was no more judge than a girl, and as to which he thought it better to be guided by the dealer, "who knows more about 'em than I do, hang it, you know," which was certainly true. He purchased elegant cord breeches and cloth-legged boots, and cantered up and down at the May races to the great edification of the lady visitors, who asked their brothers and cousins "who the funny little man with the stern expression riding on a tall horse was?" He would not play polo, enticingly expensive as was the bedizenment of the club, because it was "so beastly rough on the ponies, you know." He wandered about in winter time in marvellous and fantastic varieties of the ulster species, and spent a good deal of the handsome allowance his mother gave him in proctorial and gate fines, was generally a great ornament to his Alma Mater, and had no enemies. In short, he was one of those numerous worthy young gentlemen who, without experience, but with the best of intentions, make fools of themselves because in their set it is exceptionally bad form to be otherwise than a fool, and the virtue must be assumed if not possessed. Many assume it with such consummate readiness that it is difficult to tell the imitation from the reality.

He arrived first, and found Carl correctly dressed, his moustache twisted and *lissé*, and his dishes in the fender. Then the Raynhams arrived with Sandy, and, to the surprise of Carl, a benevolent-looking, elderly gentleman with grey whiskers, who said—

"Mr. Corsar, I hope you will pardon this intrusion, and try and regard me as an old acquaintance. I am the father of these," and he pointed to the Misses Raynham, "the uncle of this," and he pointed to Arthur, "and the sort of guardian and imitation-uncle of that," pointing to Sandy, "from whom I have heard a great deal about you; and I may say I am much obliged to you for the amount of work you seem to have got him to do. I dare say it was very difficult."

"Very glad to see you, Mr. Raynham. Sit down."

"I parted from your father yesterday evening," said Mr. Raynham. "I happened to meet him at my brother Waller's



club. A very pleasant little chat we had." Carl winced rather and changed the subject.

"Ah, yes, indeed! Let me take those things and put them down in corners, Mrs. Raynham."

"Oh! thank you. I was just looking for a place where they would not do any harm."

And Carl had the pleasure of depositing ladies' hats, sunshades, and other trifles—those charming, apparently purposeless little things which carry with them their own faint fragrance—for the first time in his own abode.

"Dish up, Sandy, will you, while I draw corks? Will you take a glass of wine before sitting down, Mr. Raynham?"

"No, thanks. I couldn't do it at my time of life. I am much obliged to you."

"You will, Arthur?"

"Er—thanks, I'll take a sherry."

The ladies arranged themselves at the table, while Sandy, with whom general adaptability to circumstances was a strong point, became for the time a waiter. He did not merely put a few dishes casually on the table; he became absolutely a serious, expressionless, skilled waiter of the highest Parisian *cachet*. He carried the clean napkin *pro forma*, that waiters' napkin which is never used; he offered wines with the grave politeness of the dignified stranger, and lent the appearance of a scene from a comedy to the whole gathering.

"I really believe we *are* people in a comedy," said May, when they were all noticing the ape-like gravity and assiduous agility of Sandy. "Papa is one of those uncles who are so indispensable in the drama. Arthur is the young man who ought to have a yellow wig parted in the middle, and an eye-glass, and pronounce his r's like w's. Sandy is what you see. I don't exactly know what mother and the girls are—guests or unimportant people, to show costumes, I should think."

"Thanks, dear," said Mrs. Raynham.

"What am I?" said Carl.

"Oh, you—you, Mr. Corsar, are a villain, I think, who will be exposed in the course of time, because you are dressed in a black coat—and other reasons. But you ought to have a tall hat and keep it on and stand about."

"Sorry I asked, now."

"And may we be privileged to know," said Mr. Raynham, "what part you have reserved for yourself?"

"*Ingenue*," said Sandy, suddenly reassuming his normal personality and sitting down, "though you mightn't think so."

"Talking of uncles," said Arthur, "why didn't Uncle Waller come up with you?"

"Cares of State, I fancy, weigh on him. I've got a political brother, Mr. Corsar. He is member for our county, and unfortunately for the other six hundred and odd legislators not a silent member."

"Swaggering old sportsman, Uncle Waller. I was in the house one night with Charlie Bohun of John's, and Uncle Waller spoke," said Arthur. "Began like the old boy in *Geneviève de Brabant*, with a lot of notes: 'In the year 1836 ——' Then they all yah'd and boo'd and howled like a blooming bear-garden, and I didn't catch the rest."

"I don't think that's exactly the sort of way to talk of an uncle," said Mr. Raynham. "The common uncle," he continued, "gets far more impertinence and far less respect than he deserves. I am an uncle."

"Oh, well, hang it, you're not like Waller Raynham, Esq."

"I believe foreign policy is his strong point," said Mrs. Raynham in a sad, didactic "society" voice.

She disapproved of fun being made—before a comparative stranger—of elderly by young people. There was no knowing how far the practice might be carried if licence were given it. Some daughter or nephew might make fun of her, or even imitate her some day behind her back.

"Yes," said her husband, "foreign policy in the shape of awful menaces and secret information about certain malevolent intentions of a power called by my relative 'Wussia;' but then he is obliged to do that. It goes down wonderfully in the county. The implacable personal animosity of South Dirts—our county, Mr. Corsar—against the Emperor of Russia is wonderful. He causes the strikes. He invents frightful engines which gather in the harvest quickly, out of the way of the weather, for the malicious purpose of cheapening bread, and so ruining British agriculture. He sends secret emissaries to bribe the present Cabinet to back him up in all these courses. He turns on undesirable weather. All, of course, in South Dirtshire. There arn't any other counties, you know; at least, we admit the existence somewhere of North Dirts, but we

don't think much of it. They plough with three horses. In the enlightened and mountainous southern division we use four."

"Isn't there any opposition?" said Carl.

"Only dissenting ministers, Ritualists who feel spiteful, and one or two people in the advanced stages of total abstinence. All the rest loyally support the Church and Queen, and the British Lion, and the Red Lion, and so on. You ought to see our county. By the way, Sandy tells me you *are* coming to see us this summer. I hope it's true?"

"Well, he was kind enough to ask me, certainly, and——"

"And I back him up, Corsar; and so do all of us, don't we?"

"I am sure," said Mrs. Raynham, "we shall be very glad to see Mr. Corsar." At the same time she still wondered *who he was*. If that mystery were only clear, she thought, it would be well enough. But one likes to know a little about people's people you see, of course.

"You'd better come, Mr. Corsar," said May, who sat on Carl's left, opposite her mother. "We can show you ships and guns, and sunsets and green downs with red-brick forts on them, and take you to catch pouts. That's the great thing at Watermouth—catching pouts. You take a jam-pot full of worms——"

"May, really!"

"Well, you *do*."

"Yes, after lunch, dear, perhaps."

"There *are* other amusements," said Miss Kate, the second daughter; "there is the regatta, and most of the regiments give dances and tennis parties in the summer."

"Pout-fishing is much more fascinating," said May. "You see all sorts of funny things and beautiful things under the water where it's shallow on a still day; and I dare say Mr. Corsar would know the names of them."

"Do you propose that Mr. Corsar should carry jam-pots full of —— the nameless and awful things which fish are fond of for you, as an amusement?" asked Mr. Raynham. "I believe that's your real programme. Whenever you find a harmless man idling for the good of his health you think he ought to fish for pouts and gaze on seaweeds and sunsets, as if his life depended on it."

"I suppose you can estimate for yourself, Mr. Corsar," said May, with icy dignity, "the quantity of truth there is in all that."

"I should think fishing for pouts was rather fun. I might



be useful in making you apparatus," said Carl. "I'm rather a dab at little things of that kind."

"You should see the knotting and rope-plaiting Carl can do," said Sandy; "he ought to have been a sailor."

"Very useful handy man to have about the premises, I should think," said Mr. Raynham. "I wonder what wages he would require to mend palings, put handles on doors, and do a little gas-fitting, to say nothing of hunting for nasty creatures for that child to fish with."

"I think I could do all that," said Carl. "I ought to have been cast away on a desert island with a tool-chest long ago. Wish I had been sometimes. I suppose you are all going down to the boats to-night?"

"I believe so," said Mrs. Raynham. "Shall we see you there?"

"I'm afraid not. Pupils will furnish the mild excitement of my evening."

"I'm not coming, Corsar," said Arthur, "and I don't believe any other man will. Why this is the last day!"

"Do you refer to the subject of Michel Angelo's well-known picture?" asked Mr. Raynham blandly.

"Don't know anything about the mediæval sportsman. I mean that the boats' places for the year will be settled to-night, and that if Corsar stays in he will find it jolly lively."

"A few have excused themselves," said Carl, "but I must wait in for the rest."

"What a horrid shame!" said May.

"Not at all. I'm used to it. Besides, the May races are not a source of wild excitement to me. I rushed along the towing-path and yelled for about four consecutive years regularly alongside my college boat; but after that the interest began to dwindle, when nearly all the rowing men I knew had taken their degrees and gone down. Are you going to ring a dinner-bell, Raynham, or swing a rattle, or anything of that sort?"

"I was going to be in our second boat but for a fluke," said Arthur.

"Oh! what's the fluke?"

"Captain of our second boat caught me eating strawberry ices and curaçoa. That did it. And he got in such a bounding rage that he put Smith in my place. It'll lose 'em their bump as sure as fate."



"Shouldn't be surprised."

"But I tell you what, Corsar, there is going to be sort of supper-dinner and music, and perhaps a bit of a hop, this evening in my rooms. Will you come round?"

"Very kind. Don't think I can. You see, though you and other men can cut coaching if you like, *I* can't."

"Oh, rot! Sandy's coming, and he's got his schools next week."

"So much the worse for him. You had both of you much better do some papers quietly," Carl said with a private smile to Mr. Raynham.

"Papers!" exclaimed Sandy; "think of it!"

"No, don't, if you want to enjoy yourselves. If you must get ploughed, you may just as well have your fun first."

"What a nice thing a wet blanket is to have about the premises," said Sandy; "I never knew such a melancholy view of things as Carl takes."

"Oh! how about your last night's conversation?"

"Yes, but that was last night; it's day now."

After lunch the party settled down in different parts of the room and chatted. The gentlemen smoked cigarettes by permission. May sat in a wicker folding-chair by the window and looked out. A sunbeam arriving just then, and observing a nice head of glossy, fair hair, shone on it without hesitation, and put the finishing touch on a very pleasant picture. And Sandy sat in the window-sill and talked to her, while Carl, standing on the rug and talking with Mr. Raynham, watched them.

In due time the whole party, excepting of course Carl, started for a little stroll through the colleges previous to going down to the river, and Carl was left to meditate on the remains of luncheon. He became aware of a faint odour of violets in the room, and finally traced it to a little wisp of black lace which May had forgotten to put round her neck when she and that sunbeam went away from Carl's rooms almost together. The sunbeam stayed a little longer than she did before it went, being subject, unlike her, to the rigid discipline of those laws which Carl so often studied. He had that study still left as a consolation, but it failed to prevent him from missing the girl, and the sunbeam that crowned and caressed her before it wandered away to glitter on a street window or two, to be reflected from the surface of the

river, and so dazzle two or three coxswains that they thereat fell a-swearing and distributed undeserved blame to their crews, and to gild the arrow vane of a large brewery, so that it shone as if it were molten in the fire.

Late that night, while preparing his notes and specimens for the morrow, flannel-clad, pipe-smoking, he heard across the dark vast court below his attic windows, open to the summer night, the sound of waltzing melodies. He almost felt the still air pulsate with the rhythmic beat of dancing feet. He did not inform the rose that—

“The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.”

But he said, as he opened a drawer whence proceeded a faint violet fragrance, “Sandy’s a lucky fellow, luckier than I, for all his groanings.” And he took out Juliet and talked to her, and let her look through a microscope at some very interesting things whose names he told her, and he asked Juliet if she would like to go pout-fishing, to which Juliet replied in her own language that she would infinitely prefer to gnaw the works of the piano and finish up with a light dessert of boot buttons.

No Sandy came to share cocoa and bread-and-butter and sad outpourings that night. And the sunbeam was far away now, making the air quiver on the Pacific slope, perhaps, and sending undesired light into the desolate depths of the *Anna Maria soi-disant* gold mine. “Well, the conclusion I’ve come to, Juliet, is that one can’t have everything one likes. And one selects the things one can’t have to like for choice. And its bed-time.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MAY SIGNALS WITH THE BLACK PETER.

THE day after the feasting and mirth of "the May," the Raynhams left Fenchester, and Nemesis descended on Sandy Maxwell in the shape of an examination. It caught him at the time when he had not studied moral philosophy long enough to be a very profound authority on it, but quite long enough to get tired of it. When one is pursuing the strange Kantian chimera of *a priori* knowledge through the eccentric divagations it usually exhibits in Paper B, one is apt to call festive overnight farewells "infernal rot" and other hard names, and to regret not having taken up some—indeed any—other subject.

So it was with Sandy, and the mingled effects of dancing, supper, much tobacco, and no sleep to speak of, were much *sotto-voce* anathema and some illustrations in a paper on Egoistic Hedonism, which were modern and more derisive than academic etiquette usually expects. In short, not being Samson, or Guy Livingstone, or a walking monster of any other kind as portrayed in ancient or modern mythology, his Audit's night's entertainment was now a bitterness and a reproach to him, sweet as it had been, and Paper B did not act as an efficient restorative.

Here is an excellent opportunity for a brief discourse on the short-sighted folly of indulging in transitory pleasures whose aftertaste of regret is enduring, concluding with a semi-jocular allusion to the "little book" of the Apocalypse. Any one is at liberty to deliver it who consistently acts up to his convictions; and may benefit humanity largely by going round on a lecturing tour to explain how he does it, and whether he really likes life conducted on principles of consistency and pure reason.

Sandy, with a face expressing mingled relief at the accom-

plishment of his task, and disgust at the meagre way in which it had been accomplished, folded up his not very voluminous documents of replies, wrote "Alexander Maxwell, Audit," with a flourish on the exterior, and deposited them with an air at the table where the silent, black-gowned, sphinx-like inquisitor sat receiving papers in (oh, irony!) a pair of large waste-paper baskets, labelled A and B. Then Sandy left the schools, tossed the long-suffering rags which gave a theoretical academic dignity to his person down the steps into the arms of a man-servant who was waiting with a hat, a bag, and a hansom, whose driver then drove furiously, in the manner of Fenchester cabmen, to the railway, and Sandy went to London.

There it will be discreet to leave him. Are not his achievements on that occasion, his reckless "carryings-on," yet the topic of oral tradition and the fruitful source of mythic anecdote among the members of the Junior Imberbes Club? For among other humble necessities Sandy of course had a London club, somewhere between Piccadilly and Pall Mall, frequented by youth "not golden but gilded," among whom a young man like Sandy was a veritable hero. "Sperge nec sparge" was their pleasing and classic motto. What their fathers had gathered the Junior Imberbes scattered. That was their conception of the division of labour.

Let us leap a little time and space. Only a few days, only a few score miles.

Mr. John Raynham sat in his study, at a well-covered knee-hole desk, where he seemed to have been doing the kind of simple arithmetic known as the addition and subtraction of money. The addition was to the incomes of tutors and tradesmen, the subtraction from the capital left by the late Mr. Maxwell for the sole benefit of Sandy his son. Mr. Raynham was just reading a letter for the second time. This was the letter:—

"IDLERS' CLUB, *June, 18—.*

"MY DEAR JOHN,

"I shall have much pleasure in accepting your invitation to the little entertainment you contemplate, and I know you will be gratified if I bring with me our mutual friend Colonel Shute. He is indeed a most worthy and benevolent man and an astute financier. He quite looks forward to the visit. They have it at the clubs that that



fellow Gladstone is going to, &c., &c., so I dare say I may have to do a little speech-making and have a dinner at Watermouth. Would you mind sounding — and — about the subject of a dinner ?

“Your very affectionate brother,

“G. WALLER RAYNHAM.”

“Yes,” reflected John Raynham, glancing absently at the clematis outside the window swinging gently across the blue sky. “I didn’t know Shute was a mutual friend ; however, as Waller seems to take it for granted, and Shute to anticipate it—well, there, it’s no use making a to-do ; I suppose a friend of Mr. Corsar is all right. *He* is a perfect gentleman, at all events, and one ought not to be too critical on the demeanour of a man who has lived a life of outdoor adventure in out-of-the-way places. Bother Waller’s politics and dinners though.”

And he wrote a short assent. Then he took up the morning paper. “Emperor of Slavonia wants a loan—to make railway—convey troops against Emperor of Mongolia. Latter wants same for ditto purpose with names reversed, also powder, second-hand ironclads, and obsolete cartridges, no doubt. Wonder which savage potentate is nearest bankruptcy ? ’Pon my word these Eastern Empires are almost as bad as South American Republics, I do believe. Those two idiotic Pacific States cutting each other’s throats over and concerning an exaggerated manure heap grievance want loans too—ten per cent (stock worth nine, I think) and eleven respectively. I dare say the revolutionary societies of all these countries, whose ambitions are vague, explosive, and consequently philanthropic, would pay best and longest if they would only advertise in the money column, and probably save their presidents and sovereigns the trouble and expense of going to war, in their own efficacious way.”

And Mr. Raynham leaned back in his chair and read and murmured on. An old gentleman he was, not the “old gentleman” of *Punch*, usually of the fussy and “testy” order, but one of those gentle-looking, neat-faced, white-whiskered, tidy, courteous, *Times*-reading old gentlemen, often to be found in summer-time in large Anglo-American hotels in Switzerland, clad in grey tweed and white puggies, letting their womenkind talk foreign languages for them to cab-

drivers and railway officials, and good-naturedly believing that a modern and expensive education has enabled these ladies to understand at least seven per cent. of the valuable information the natives give them.

Mr. Raynham got up and rang the bell. A black-clothed servitor answered it, with the inevitable "You ring, sir?" an expression conveying intense curiosity as to the possible answer to the question.

"Yes, Prout, I did. Do you know where Miss May is?"

"Out in the park, sir, I think. She went out with a book about an hour ago in the direction of the 'ammick, sir."

"Wish you'd go and ask her to come in here, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And—er—Prout!"

"Yes, sir."

"Where's your mistress?"

"Out in the tennis-ground, sir. Miss Raynham and Miss Kate is there, sir, playing tennis with Mr. 'Olroyde and Mr. Cameron of the 'ighlanders, sir. And Miklos have come back, sir."

"Has he? what's his news?"

"Brought Mr. Maxwell's luggage and 'orse, sir. Mr. Maxwell is to follow to-day, in time for dinner."

"Oh, ah, of course. Well, send Miss May here, will you?"

"Yes, sir."

After about a quarter of an hour (spent by Prout in looking in the wrong places and asking questions of under-gardeners) May arrived and knocked at the door.

"Come in. Oh, it's you, is it! The Emperor of Slavonia is much to blame, May. He is an irreclaimable barbarian—what young Mr. Corsar would call a throw-back, no doubt."

"Yes, I always thought so—they all are. I have known it ever since those Slavonian naval officers—one was a prince—got so conspicuously intoxicated at a dance in Watermouth. But what have they done now?"

"They have almost made me forget it is your birthday, my dear, and that it is now nineteen years since you were a small, large-eyed object—you *were* an object then—in a white *berçonette*. I have a good deal to do this morning, or I should have sent for you sooner. In the meantime give me a kiss,

and accept this little present. Get yourself a dress, or some books, or whatever you like with it. I don't quite understand girls' wants, but I dare say you do."

And Mr. Raynham gave his daughter an oblong, semi-transparent piece of paper with curious pink patterns, and inscriptions on it, and, what is more, the small, distinct signature of John Raynham in the lower right-hand corner. His daughter gave the desired embrace, multiplied by three (two cheeks and bridge of nose—happy John Raynham!), and said the simple but effective words, "Thanks ever so much, papa!" (Miss Raynham and Kate said father and mother when they remembered that fashion now consecrated the words. May stuck to the papa and mamma of childhood.)

"What are you doing this morning, May?"

"I was out in the hammock, reading."

"Reading what?"

"*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I think I had nearly got into a midsummer day's dream when Prout came."

"Don't you care about playing tennis with your sisters?"

"They are enough to make up the set without me. I like playing well enough with them, but not with men."

"Why not?"

"Men play so much better. Never mind, wait till Sandy comes, he'll show these Highlanders the way, I think."

"You are getting slangy."

"I know. It's Arthur, I suppose. I can't help it."

"Sandy is coming to-day."

"I suppose so. I see his exam. is over."

"I didn't know you read the University Intelligence. Perhaps you read Current Prices as well."

"Oh, yes, often—Grey shirtings, languid; Staffordshire pig, buoyant; Hungarian Gold Rentes, down a quarter. Don't you thank me for the information? I am a *vol-au-vent financière*."

"Dreadful! Go and *volez au vent* again. Remember you are grown up—nearly."

"Quite. I feel large, elderly, and dignified."

"Large? Eight stone four, I take it, with a mean length of five three and a half."

"That's no mean length for a girl."

"You are as bad as a Shakespearian clown! I mean average length; but 'I don't want to fight.' Dignified, good-



ness knows you are! I believe you don't play tennis before those officers for fear of deranging your train."

"Haven't got a train on. You see me at our dance, when I *shall* have one. It certainly *is* rather unbecoming, not to say cow-like, for girls to play tennis. I wonder they don't think of that before they gambol before the garrison so much."

"Don't try to be satirical, May, at least, not in that manner. Leave it for older and uglier people than yourself. By the way, Waller's coming down."

"Yes, I supposed so."

"And he's asked me to let him bring an adventurous and heroic American colonel, raw from his native slope—one of your fabulously rich people they have out there, I understand. I've only met him once."

"Oh, I hope he'll come. I'll read up the language in Bret Harte, and ask searching questions about placer-mining."

"There is every prospect of his coming to dine, and perhaps to dance. I shan't ask him to sleep just yet. Wait till I know him more. Besides, the place will be full. There, run away now, and go on with the midsummer day's dream."

May went, but not out of doors.

She went up-stairs to her own room, her combination of studio and library—not *boudoir*, because as yet *bouder* was in her life an unconjugated verb. Although in summer-time her principal apartment was the fair earth, with elms for pillars, blue space for roof, with white or rose or gold-fringed, cloudy drapery, May had a room of her own to do what she liked in, when she liked. Had she been a man it would have been a smoking-room. As it was it was a graceful and delicate shadowing-forth of a pleasant and "fair personality." The colouring and decoration were the accumulated result of her suggestions, wishes, and imaginative impulses as they occurred from time to time. In May's multiform disposition there was a sensuous delight in beautiful things, of the existence or absence of which she would be dimly conscious perhaps even in the dark. *Similia similibus.*

Her room gave the general impression of deep dull reds and browns, not warm enough to be obtrusive, and lightened here and there by the pale glimmer of old blackened silver mirror frames or brazen candlesticks, and the black and white of an etching or photograph. Where some other girl would have had white or *ecru* lace curtains, this girl had hangings of umber



and olive, interthreaded with tracings of silver. Her pictures were few, and mostly of the black and white order. Etchings she was especially fond of which portrayed old fantastic towers and streets, or town-houses from Flanders, Germany, or France, and several people knowing this had given her several such. Dürer's "Knight and Death" had been given her by somebody who vaguely thought that she was fond of what somebody vaguely called high art. May thought it was an ugly idea much too well expressed, but had taste enough to see that among her old *Stadt* and *Rath-Häuser* it was not out of place. A "Dance of Death" series she had absolutely declined, when offered it by her uncle Waller (who was an art-critic *soi-disant*, among other things). When he said, "But these serve to remind even the fairest of us of our mortality," May answered, "I don't want to be reminded—more than once a week—of mine, and I think skeletons are nasty." There was much in that. The fell march of Holbein's horrible fleshless cynic through the pomp and pride, the vice and virtue, the richness and squalor, the wisdom and folly of men, greeted by the tottering, friendless old man, yelled at and fled from by the miser and emperor, leading away the peasant's little child, with cold, remorseless talons, a pitiless, grinning, triumphant, material, horrible sixteenth-century phantasm like Holbein's Death, has surely no place in such a room as this:—

" Here, where the world is quiet,  
Here, where all trouble seems  
Dead, winds and spent waves' riot  
In doubtful dreams—of dreams."

Here, from the open windows, was to be seen the blue summer sea twinkling under the sky, beyond the yellow and brown town and mast-grown harbour of Watermouth, and in the night the distant advance of the tides smote the dark silence of the tree-clad plain between these windows and the sea with a low, sonorous, soothing rhythm, like the music from a curled sea-shell. Here in a corner between the fire and the window stood May's piano, where she could sit and play in the late evenings, while the crimson streaks and primrose glow of the sunset faded over the distant water and made a motive for her melody.

There May loved to sit, to play whatever caprice put into her head, or surrounding and memory suggested, to give out

a resonant confession of the then state of her mind, in tones some petulant, some pathetic, many joyous. Sometimes the waltz, in which the nineteenth century expresses its comfortable, well-fed, well-dressed dilettante "Welt-Schmerz;" sometimes the defiant "Soldier's Chorus," pealing up to the summer sky like Maud's war song; perhaps the lively, thin *crin-crin* compositions of latter-day comic opera; perhaps some solemn, earnest music, with a meaning in it quite other than champagne foam and prancing chorus-girls, from the soul of Herr Capellmeister Bach, or some old song of England or Scotland, which, if she was quite sure no one was listening, she would sing to the sole critic she ever sang to, the silent black cat, who gave to the room an air at once mysterious and diabolic. Often while May was playing fugues or singing ballads to Peter the cat, Carl Corsar was rattling a polka to sweep the cobwebs of idiotic pupildom from his brain and soothe the listening Juliet the rat some hundred miles away. Here is the opportunity for a treatise on undesigned coincidences.

Against the wall, on one side of the room, stood a tall black cabinet containing May's books. She had not read very much, but what she had read was among the best that the world has succeeded in producing. The book most read of all, most central, and most easy to reach, was Shakespeare. She might, indeed, have been one of those fair young heroines of his comedies, full of delicate and subtle gay thoughts, capable (when the hour and the man came) of wonderful passion and pathos, had she had the great good fortune to live in his age. And he would have known and understood her better than even you or I—or even Sandy—will ever be able to. The translated history of that Knight of the Rueful Countenance, at whom most of us have laughed, for whom some of us have well-nigh wept, was not far from Shakespeare in that cabinet. Then there was the mystic, three-fold world of Dante, that shadow of the known on a background of the unknown, in its own beautiful tongue. And not far off was the laughing philosopher who gave to the world the troubles of Dandin and Sganarelle, the pranks of Scapin, and the sombre cynicism of Don Juan. That fair, distant world of chivalry and enchantment in which Lancelot and Elaine, Merlin and Vivien move in a sunlit haze of ancient forest, towered wall, and glancing armour, was close to those near, dear friends of all of us—

George Warrington, Arthur Pendennis, Philip Firmin, the eminent warrior Costigan, and the noble old figure of Colonel Newcome. Nor were these all.

"Peter, do you know this is my birthday, and I am grown up?—ever so much more so than I was yesterday, of course." Peter blinked at the sunlight sleepily, and intimated that these sensations were things of the past to a respectable elderly cat, who had seen many children and grandchildren floating in duck-ponds ere now. "And—listen, you lazy old thing! Sandy is coming back again—Sandy who saved you from rude and cruel boys when you were young and handsome, neither of which you are now." The sound of his hero's name provoked no responsive chord in that black, fur-enclosed bosom. Peter thought, Niobe-like, of drowned progeny, and still more of the heat of the weather, which evidently was a beneficent provision of nature for elderly cats, for whose health a good deal of sleep in the day-time had been prescribed.

And May leaned on the sill of the window and looked at the sail-specked sea. Peter arose, stretched, opened a very pink mouth and yawned, and silently and suddenly, with an agility beyond his years, jumped on May's back, and sat on her shoulders. "Ah! One ironclad, two colliers, and a yacht," remarked Peter. "Now I don't see what there is interesting in that, even to girls who always take an interest in silly and unprofitable things. Now if that sea were all milk, into which some one 'had inserted some mice to make it more nice,' I could imagine a rational interest in it. I should think that man-of-war, now, had a good many rats on board, a thousand perhaps. Fancy a thousand rats—oh my! I dreamed the other night I was chained down and gnawed by rats. I must be more careful with those salmon back-bones late at night."

"How wise you look, Peter!"

"Of course I do, silly child! If she only knew what I was really thinking of!"

Seven years ago when May was a slender, tree-climbing, chocolate-cream-hungering young thing, with that combination of spring-like fairness, incomplete perfection, youth, health, and sea-air which make up the marvellous and transitory beauty of a child, before the no less marvellous but more enduring beauty of womanhood has grown, when Sandy was



a big boy with a strong French accent, and Peter a very juvenile cat with a tendency to chase all moving objects, from wool balls to butterflies—part of the predatory instinct, no doubt, interwoven with the poetry and prettiness of feline adolescence—the said Sandy had rescued the said Peter, with fracas and wounding, from certain young rustics who were about to treat the kitten as the ignorant and ill-bred sometimes like to treat the defenceless and weak, as a certain mob once treated a certain Stephen. They were making it a target for stones, it being a stranger and a waif on the highway at the time. No inspector of the R. S. P. C. A. happened to be passing at the time, but Sandy did, and after a Homeric encounter, brought the small black squealing thing and laid it muddy and bruised in May's hands. It had been her cat ever since.

But that was seven years ago. In seven years a great many things can happen. In mere existence for that time people alter and develop greatly. So do cats. Seven years' famine or plenty, a seven years' war, or seven years' hard labour would probably alter them still more. Think of the opportunities! You can commit one deadly sin a year, for instance—a more leisurely mode of procedure than that usually adopted, and tending to greater perfection of method and detail. Do not seven years separate the sovereignty of Louis called Capet from that of Napoleon called Buonaparte?

They showed Sandy Maxwell many countries, taught him many languages, gave him lessons hard and otherwise on that curiously variegated thing called female human nature, and changed him from an ambitious and active boy to an agreeable member of society such as we find him, a philosopher of the Democritus school mostly, with much indefinite yearning and no particular aim, endowed with many accomplishments, physical and spiritual, with two pictures never quite effaced from his mind through all the strange wanderings of his apprentice year, whether courting Marquises d'Amaëgui guitar in hand, or seriously assuming to know something about the theory of Free-will. And the two pictures were a dead father and a child-girl nursing a wounded kitten.

And he, Sandy, came walking across the lawn this summer afternoon looking searchingly up at the house, till he caught the quaint picture of May and Peter, framed in flowering clematis. And the sight brought him shame, for follies dead



and gone ; shame for the Junieur Imberbes Club, and its silly monotonous stagnation in the "gross mud-honey of town," that mixed shame and good resolution which is of the nature of a "morning after" sensation, and lasts nearly as long. Watch well your iron idols, girls, lest they have feet of clay.

Sandy waved a silk handkerchief. May, not immediately finding a handkerchief, waved Peter, much to his disgust, causing him to take an instant dislike to Sandy. "And I think," as the Doggrel Bard hath it, "he was justified."

## CHAPTER IX.

### FOILS.

“Warum küssen sich die Menschen?  
Sprach der Kater, Hiddigegei.”

MAY snatched up a sunshade and ran down-stairs and out at the front door, where she found Sandy giving directions to Miklos Debrucza about his horse. This person, a tall, lean, lantern-jawed, dark-eyed, black moustached ex-lancer of his Austrian Majesty, born in the Bukowina of Greco-Roumanian parentage, was Sandy's personal and confidential servant. Sandy had saved his life once in some of his wanderings, and Miklos, popularly Mike, served for his simple keep and any occasional largesse Sandy had to bestow. They and the horse understood one another well. Mike was an apt linguist. When you have been born at Czernowicz, beaten by a Greek mother, sworn at by a Rouman father, ordered about by under-officers who sometimes were Poles, sometimes Magyars, sometimes Germans, you have had great natural opportunities for acquiring the gift of tongues. Mike was of indefinite age, wiry, active, tall, without a superfluous ounce of flesh, without a grey hair, and wore the quiet costume of a British groom with a cavalry air and walk, and when he went with hollow eyes gleaming, moustache rippling horizontally into space, on a promenade in the gaslit byways of Watermouth, the uniformed military of that town found him a formidable rival among the fair whom they languidly courted in the bar of the Blue Bell and other resorts.

When May appeared at the door this person took his hat off and disappeared, and she and Sandy went to the tennis-ground, where a small gathering were enjoying the meal called afternoon tea, so seductive and so fatal to him who would enjoy a subsequent dinner. A basket-table was spread under a shady pair of elms, and Mrs. Raynham and the girls sat on basket-chairs, while Arthur, who had been umpiring,

lay on the grass, and two tall lieutenants hovered in the neighbourhood of Kate and Ethel, cup in hand, only wishing that the hot tea were iced brandy-and-soda, and that there were more of it. Sandy was greeted by the Raynhams and introduced to Messrs. Holroyd and Cameron, one red and one fair, one rather hot-tempered, the other rather phlegmatic, otherwise demanding no very particular description. Clean-looking, sunburnt, gentlemanly, broad-shouldered, narrow-headed, close-cropped men, who talked of Sandy afterwards as "the foreign chap" because he had never been able to lose the French throat "r."

Every one was resting, including Arthur, who had done absolutely nothing except remark "Deuce! vantage!" at intervals, in a highly athletic suit of clothes. After a good deal of tea and thin bread-and-butter, it occurred to Arthur, who was playing the part of host to the men in the absence of his uncle, to suggest a glass of sherry before the final sets were played. Holroyd and Cameron accepted with alacrity, and they went to the house, Sandy accompanying.

Holroyd was a little sulky. In the first place he had been on the losing side at tennis. In the second, he had walked over about a mile and a half of dusty road for the purpose of seeing May Raynham, and had had to put up with Kate, until May arrived seeming entirely monopolised by the foreign chap. In the third, the foreign chap had shown a tendency to absorb the ladies' attention, and May's in particular, with his own conversation, that also being on subjects Holroyd took little interest in, and in some cases did not quite understand, though he had (with much temporary effort) passed one or two examinations. Wherefore he lay in wait for Sandy, to see if he could not be made to feel his position better, to entangle him in his talk, to induce him to do something ridiculous, such as foreigners habitually do—sing a song perhaps without accompaniment. That usually made people more ridiculous than anything else in Holroyd's experience. In fact he distinctly sought for an opportunity to "score off" Sandy. In the hall, as they left the dining-room, he observed numerous arm trophies, including the star of javelins which denoted that a Raynham had once been called on to exercise the function of High Sheriff. Sandy took down what looked like a genuine Andrea Ferrara and fingered it critically. Swagger, thought Holroyd, who was one of the few soldiers

of modern England who take an interest in steel weapons and the use of them. Here was the opportunity.

"Do you go in much for this sort of thing?" he said to Sandy.

"Yes; I never let an opportunity pass of learning something new of the art of fighting. I like swords as some men like dogs or horses."

"Fine blade that," observed Cameron, contemplating the scene with imperturbable eye-glass.

"And the fellows knew how to mount them," replied Sandy, "to say nothing of using them, in those days. You fence, of course?"

"Yes, I fence."

"By Jove, I should think Holroyd did fence!" said Cameron, dropping his eye-glass in sudden enthusiasm, "not a man to lick him at foils and sticks."

The front door darkened a little, for the figure of May stood in it. "Are you people going to fight?"

"Happy thought!" said Arthur. "I say, Sandy, have a bout with Holroyd with the foils. He's an awfully good man. I've seen him walk into the instructor here."

"Do, Mr. Holroyd!" said May. "It's much nicer to look at than tennis, and we will all look on. I should like to know if Sandy is really as good as he thinks he is."

Now for the score, thought Holroyd.

"Well, if you like, Miss Raynham, and if—er—Maxwell doesn't mind, I'll be most happy, but my hand's rather out. I haven't touched a foil for a month."

"Nor I for three," said Sandy. "Mike!"

Mike appeared, sombre and picturesque, something between Don Quixote and the ghost of the Corsican Brother in modern British dress, under the shadow of the staircase, through the doorway which led to the back parts of the house from the hall. Sandy gave directions in a foreign tongue, upon which Mike quickly fetched foils, masks, and gloves from some mysterious lair.

"You can come too, Mike," said Sandy, "to take the things back. I know you want to come."

Mike saluted, and followed the party, carrying the paraphernalia. Holroyd was happier now. The foreign chap had put on so much side that he was sure to be a duffer—people who put side on always were. That is your fallacy, Holroyd.



Sandy did, it must be confessed, put on what you gracefully term "side," as a rule, but he was no duffer, at any rate in these matters. Sandy was happy too. He always was when he was going to hear steel clink on steel. He became mediæval at once, with the same earnest readiness with which he had for five minutes become a café waiter in Corsar's rooms. He felt a spiritual feathered broadbrim on his head, a spiritual doublet on his body, a pair of high, wrinkled, and scalloped boots on his legs, a cloak, and he certainly would soon feel a real hilt in his hands. The illusion was a little theatrical, perhaps, but he felt it, and it acted on his thoughts and demeanour, his walk, expression, and gestures. He was the polished noble rake of the old comedy about to salute death with a satirical bow. He was an actor, playing to an appreciative audience of one—himself. To the others he was Sandy Maxwell, about to fence with Mr. Holroyd.

When they reached the lawn where the trees were with the tea and the ladies seated under them, May had already explained that there was to be a tournament, had voted herself into the chair as Queen of Beauty, and prepared a rose to be bestowed on the victor. All this in mere open jest, without any half-suggested, half-concealed sentimentality.

"Quite like a scene in *Hamlet*," remarked Mr. Raynham, strolling into the group in a grey felt hat, cigar in mouth, hands in pockets.

"You shall be the king and look on," replied May, "if you won't poison the tea!"

"What *do* you mean, May?" said Mrs. Raynham. Then suddenly reflecting that the question was not a brilliant one, added, "Oh! I see. Of course."

The group of spectators arranged themselves comfortably in the shade of the elms, the two combatants stood face to face with the afternoon sun to one side, shining through the upper branches of the trees which bounded the lawn on the westward and southward. Mike remained in the background.

Sandy saluted the spectators. Holroyd did the same. Then they saluted each other, and put on their masks. Now Holroyd was a really good fencer after the gymnasium instructor style, and fell into an accepted and academic attitude. Sandy adopted an original one, which was French modified by instruction in Naples, and assumed the courteous gravity of the man who might have just said, "*Je suis à vos ordres, Monsieur!*"

in one of those comedies with the inevitable duel in it. In the meantime he kept his wits about him, watched Holroyd's attack, parried without attempting a *riposte*, with a coolness which soon had the effect looked forward to of exasperating Holroyd, who began to attack furiously and neglect his opposition. Consequence, a sudden, simple disengagement, and a foil bent into a sudden hoop-shape on Holroyd's breast-bone, before he could even sketch a parry.

"One!" remarked Cameron, the imperturbable, grieved for his friend, contemptuous still of the foreign chap, but disregarding his feelings in pursuing the sacred calling of umpire.

Movements, and *sotto voce* conversation under the elms, leaning forward on the part of the ladies. Mike grinned. Then Sandy let Holroyd touch him. Out of good-nature? Well, not quite. It was that he might acknowledge his touch by the orthodox salute, a thing his antagonist had omitted to do. Holroyd began to perceive that the desired score off the foreign chap was not immediately likely to occur, and that perhaps he was a little out of condition. However, he fought on pluckily enough, having theoretical holes drilled through his lungs about twice a minute. At last Sandy disarmed him, picked up the dropped foil, handed it to his antagonist, saluted, and waited.

This *coup de theatre* caused the umpiring eye-glass to say, "Drop it, old man, you're beaten hollow."

Now Holroyd, although instinctively disliking Sandy, and short-tempered, was a gentleman, and said, taking off his mask and wiping his hot face which had black wire marks on the chin, "You really are a wonderful fencer, Maxwell, where did you pick it up?"

"In different places. In Paris. In Italy. There are a great many faults in the Neapolitan style, but they have some good tricks. I'll show you any time you like." Mike carried away the things solemnly, with a smile in his eye.

"Thanks, I shan't forget that. Miss Raynham," he added to May, "I'm afraid I haven't earned your rose."

"Oh, that was a joke, here is a rose for each of you."

Gratification of Holroyd, who subsequently put that rose away inside the only book in his bare barrack-room, a worn "railway" edition of a sporting novel.

"Come to my room," said Sandy, "and have a wash."

“Thanks.”

When they came back, Cameron was slowly emitting opinions. Fencing was good exercise, but no other use. All that duelling they did abroad was bosh. If a man wants to fight another, why can't he do it the proper way, with his fists?

“Of course,” said Sandy, “if a man be drawn into a fight with a tramp or burglar, he uses his fists, and with the average tramp or burglar the average gentleman would very likely get the worst of it. But between gentlemen, don't you think noble steel more refined than the mauling and collaring of bricklayers?”

“Why, would you go in for the regular pistols and coffee business?”

“Pistols or swords. More luck in the former; more chance for skill in the latter. I don't like duelling. I don't wish it encouraged. But even the milk-and-water theatrical combats of Parisian journalists seem to me to have more dignity and less awkwardness than the practice of sullenly ‘cutting’ your rival in anything whenever you meet him. Besides, there are sometimes two men so much in each other's way that it seems evident that each ought to take measures to remove the inconvenient competitor. It is natural.”

“That is very well for people like Mercutio and Tybalt,” put in Mr. Raynham, “but how about the subsequent interview with an elderly gentleman in a wig, temporarily adorned with a black cap, in which the conversation is all on one side?”

“Do you know,” replied Sandy laughing, “I never contemplated that. I was looking at the thing as it stands on its own merits, apart from accidental hindrances and conventions.”

“You were looking at it with the morals and feelings of the sixteenth century, my boy, when every man was called on to carry a sword, and use it for good purposes. It was right enough for them, but the situation is altered now.”

A little more of this conversation caused Holroyd and Cameron to discover that they had appointments elsewhere, and really must be off, whereupon Sandy went to May, and said, “Now those two excellent bores have gone, let me see Peter.”

They ascended to the room with the black cabinet, the old silver and brass, the etchings, and rich dark colouring. Peter slept as usual. Sandy took Peter into his lap, and sat down before the piano and began a Spanish song—a serenade—in



a deep voice, a little rough, but true. May walked about the room listening and thinking. How well Sandy had fenced! What good attitudes he had fallen into! How courteously and gracefully he had behaved! The *coups de theatre* were not lost on her, but were taken as unpremeditated impulses and put down to Sandy's credit. Of course Sandy had done no harm. He had tried to shine before a pretty girl and succeeded. Who would not with his opportunities? Now he was doing it again in a different way.

"When is Mr. Corsar coming?" asked she when Sandy had finished. Sandy started.

"To-morrow."

Do you know the lecture-room trick in which a flask contains a saturated solution of a certain salt, into which a crystal is dropped, when the whole suddenly crystallizes? Sandy's vague incomplete feelings of shame, affection, self-importance, and *désir du beau* were the fluid, May's question was the crystal.

Could it be that May had carried away a memory of Carl as something other than simply a friend of Sandy's? What she ought to regard Carl as was, of course, a mere appendage of Sandy, an outlying part of his personality, like the college, the caps and gowns, the river, the umbrageous lawns, and choral services—all to be remembered as a background, of which he, Sandy, was the foreground and central figure. While he existed May surely could not be so mad, so wrong-headed as to make Carl the foreground figure, and relay him to the middle distance? He had never treated her as a lover, certainly; only as a confidential friend and playmate, who had taught him more English than his masters years ago, and learned from him to climb, to skate, to ride, to fire pistols. But the mere imagination of the possibility that some one might seek to take her away from him led him to the discovery that she was indispensable to him, even though the somebody should be his best friend, Carl Corsar. If any attempt to trespass on Sandy's ground were likely to be made, it were as well to put up a legible notice of Private Property at once. And, after all, he loved her. For all his visits to the Venusberg, for all his Spanish serenades, for all the foam-born folly of great cities he had known, the vision of the little girl nursing the wounded kitten had always come back to him again, bringing repose and repentance. The star shone on



when the fireworks had gone out and the will-o'-the-wisps fled away. And here was the girl, and here was the cat. Sandy got up from the piano and carried Peter to the window, where May stood and looked at the sea. He looked at her as she had not seen him look before. Peter awoke and observed.

"I wonder if Peter remembers the first time you carried him?" said Sandy, as he handed the cat to May—for the purpose of ascertaining if she would withdraw her hand when it came into contact accidentally with his, as he meant it to. She did not. He prolonged the contact until he felt her fingers tremble a little on Peter's black fur neck, then withdrew his hand. This was the first move of the game, and he had won so far.

"He would be very ungrateful if he didn't remember," said May. ("Remember!" reflected Peter. "Of course I do. But I don't see why these old stories should be raked up now. It's all to *his* credit, no doubt; but it is rather a painful recollection to me. I was made ridiculous and uncomfortable and dirty, and no decent cat cares to be reminded of that.")

"She is self-conscious now," thought Sandy; "that's all right." Aloud he added, "Do you know that in all my wanderings for seven years past I never forgot you standing out there on the grass one summer afternoon like this with him in your arms?"

"Didn't you?"

"No. And I saw you again so, once, in a half-dream, when they picked me out of a river in Austria, and I thought it was death and Paradise coming together."

"Sandy! What do you mean?" exclaimed May, coming a little nearer. Sandy caressed the cat and May's hand again, and did not leave them this time.

"Oh, there was no danger to speak of. It was only a stupid accident. Mike was hauling me out, though he swears I hauled him out. That's how we made friends." May shuddered. Her emotions became hyperæsthetic.

"And you thought you saw—me and Peter?"

"You—not as you are—as you were; and Peter as he was." Sandy had May's hand in his now, and she was trembling. The sun came in at the window and made Peter blink.

"Funny," said May. "I wonder why?"

"Because I loved you," said Sandy fiercely, "and so I do

now, and always do." And he kissed her just above the ear, where the little fair ripples of hair were astray.

"You shouldn't do that," said May in a low, non-resisting voice.

"Why?"

"Because—oh, it's wrong!" This quite seriously followed by, "And I must go now."

"Because it's wrong. Ah, well, that is a matter of opinion. No other reason?" Silence. "No other reason, May?"

"No, no other reason." Sandy put his arms round her and looked in her eyes.

"I see no reason at all why not," said he. May surrendered, and was kissed, and ran out of the room. Sandy threw himself on a chair. "By Jove! I wanted a grand passion. Here it is." And he meant it.

Holroyd and Cameron were walking back to barracks along the dusty road. "What a d——d gladiator the man Maxwell seems to be!" said Cameron.

"Not bad to talk to when you get him alone."

Holroyd was jealous, and it made him scrupulously generous. He felt his chance of May was waning, and May meant more to this tall, stiff, brick-red, thirty-year-old officer with regulation moustache and regulation ideas than she had any idea, or any one else, but Cameron, his taciturn friend with a West-of-Scotland accent. Cameron wanted no May himself, but he did not like to see Holroyd "cut out" and generally "sat on" by a person like the young foreign chap who put side on.

"That's just the way with girls," thought good, honest Cameron in his mighty inexperience. "They all like a fellow who can show off. If the outside is nice they don't care for the rest. Poor old Hollybush!" "Hollybush" was the rather feeble nickname the mess had invented for Holroyd. It referred doubly to his prickly temper and his name. Poor old Hollybush!

When certain circumstances made May momentarily forget Peter, that worthy animal fell, scrambling and clutching at space like Claude Frollo, to the floor. "Blank—Blank—Blank! Dash!" observed Peter hastily and loudly. "I wonder what those two young fools are up to now. I wonder which is the bigger fool. I'm afraid they'll forget me now for a while. I like to be talked to and rubbed when I'm awake. It may seem childish, but it makes one sleepy, and

that's the great thing nowadays. I will attract this fellow's attention."

And Peter rubbed himself ostentatiously against Sandy's hand, which hung near the ground.

"Hullo, Peter! Did they drop him then? Come up here."

"Fool!" remarked Peter in his own language, "don't address me like a kitten. You'll expect me to run after my tail and chase balls directly."

"I'm very much obliged to you, Peter. You've been very useful to-day, as well as beautiful; but you are always that."

"Not such a fool as I thought he would turn out when he grew up. Purr, whurr. Keep on that sort of stroking; I like it. I am sleepy. Let me dig my claws into your trousers, so. Purr."

"I wonder what Carl's views on May are? I must keep a jolly sharp look-out on him. It'll be my own fault if I lose her now—and I can't lose you—my little May, whom I played with. Fancy her a young lady of nineteen with her first lover. Wonder if I am the first? I think so. Wish I could tell her I'd never kissed any girl but her."

And Sandy and Peter dozed in the arm-chair while the sun went toward the north-west, where the sea was calm, wide, with an opal and amber glitter, under the warm veil of summer vapour. And May? May shared a large bedroom with Kate, and both were dressing for dinner in the soft light of the evening sun. Kate noticed that May's hands were a little nervous, and that she dropped a hair-pin once or twice.

"It's the effect of your birthday, May, I suppose."

## CHAPTER X.

“COME TO ME AT ONCE,” JENNY.

Few things look more cheerful than a room cleared and decarpeted for dancing feet when in use, or more dingy and mournful after use, when the revellers have gone to well-earned rest, when the echoes of music have died away, and the floor is a receptacle for every kind of frail flotsam and jetsam of dirty tarletan, torn *balayeuse*, fragmentary bouquets, with a faint atmosphere hanging everywhere composed of roses, musk, patchouli, toilet-powder, brandy-and-soda, and “beer for the band.” The Raynham’s large dining-room was in the former of these stages—the mirthful, wakeful, frolicsome, initiatory stage, before fathers and mothers and chaperones had had time to get sleepy and ill-tempered. The dancing ladies had fresh faces and untorn dresses, and the dancing gentlemen were in the shy, sober, group-in-a-corner-together state, which a few more turns and a few brandy-and-sodas would soon modify. Mrs. Raynham, with a languid smile, was welcoming perpetual new-comers, who proceeded to stand about uneasily if they were males, and feel their collars and chins; who smiled a great deal in a meaningless way and glanced surreptitiously at mirrors if they were females.

Holroyd and Cameron were there, grave, tall, and sombre-looking, as if they had had their hair cut that afternoon (which, indeed, they had), as well as other men of war, horse, foot, and marine. The most jovial, easy, unembarrassed-looking men present were a few naval officers and young Arthur Raynham, who was chattering amicably to May and making remarks which he considered cuttingly descriptive on everybody’s appearance and costume. Waller Raynham walked about dealing his brilliancy out to dowagers in small doses, like a revolving light. John Raynham was giving directions to Prout about wine, and scattering casual, abrupt, good-



humoured greeting to passing guests. Ethel and Kate were engaged in calling their female acquaintances "dear" a good deal, and going through the correct amount of hospitable self-denial in the matter of partners. One rather languid waltz had been already "walked through" by a few young and enthusiastic performers, who would wake up by-and-by to a livelier appetite for exertion.

"May was listening to the kindly prattle of Arthur Raynham, with a sort of restlessness which had lately become peculiar to her—an inexplicable fact to herself, but comprehensible enough to the passive and experienced spectator, if he had happened to be present, which he did not; for Arthur was neither passive nor particularly experienced. He was cultivating what he considered a hopeless but eternal and deep-seated passion for his charming cousin, was claiming more places in her programme than he had any right to expect or any chance of getting, and was under the impression that consideration and regard for him were the very natural and proper motives that made her ask him questions about academic life. So Arthur went on placidly, like a little cataract of slang, pouring out for ever anecdotes about proctors or his boat, until at last a light broke on him that his eloquence was of the *sic vos non vobis* order, when May observed—

"How well they fenced the other day; is that done very much at Fenchester?"

"Oh, not so awfully much as all that."

"As all what?"

"I mean every one doesn't do it. It isn't as if it were boating or cricket, you know. But Maxwell partly set the fashion in that, and taught me all I know; wish he'd taught me all he knew. Awfully good fellow, Maxwell," added the cheerful freshman patronisingly.

"Praise from Raynham is too valuable to be forgotten," remarked the person alluded to, stepping into the group with a kindly glance at the enamoured and rather crestfallen Arthur, who retired, feeling, as he expressed it to the first person he met, "rather out of it, you know." The first person he met happened to be Holroyd, who was advancing to claim the dance that the triumphant Sandy was evidently making his own by documentary evidence.

Mr. Holroyd remarked, "Oh, that foreign fellow is here already, is he?"

Arthur replied: "I believe he was born in England, of English dam and sire—awfully popular man up the 'Varsity—rather a pal of mine."

"Ah, well, the 'Varsity isn't Watermouth. I never was at the 'Varsity myself; but I should think the service was a different business altogether."

"I must say I agree with you, Mr. Holroyd," observed Sandy as he passed with May on his arm.

"What the devil did he want to put his oar into our conversation for?" remarked Holroyd ferociously to Arthur as Sandy disappeared. Cameron was placidly listening to Ethel Raynham's conversation, which was of the strict musical-glass order just then, and troubled not his head (which did not readily contain many ideas at the same time) about the affairs of others. There was this difference between Holroyd and Cameron. Though neither was a very entertaining companion, the former rebelled at the idea of admitting any man's superiority to himself, the latter did not.

"There, I mean to enjoy myself to-night, Sandy."

"And I mean to help you—if I can. Can I?"

"Try." This with a very provoking, because quite inexplicable, smile.

"I am afraid I am a stumbling-block and a rock of offence to your friend Mr. Holroyd."

"Oh, bother Mr. Holroyd! Why didn't your mysterious and amusing friend Mr. Corsar come in when you did? I want to see him again."

"I don't know. Oh, yes, I do though! He stopped outside on the lawn to talk to that American that Mr. Raynham has invited, it appears."

"Oh, Colonel Shute. Regular American name, Cyrus Shute, isn't it?"

"With a regular American owner. Not half a bad fellow either—quite a character in his way."

"A good character?"

"I have no reason to assume the contrary. Your friend Mr. Corsar does assume it, though. I don't know why. Carl generally has a reason for what he does and says."

"Carl—why do you always call him Carl?"

"Excuse the platitude of my reply—because it is his name."

"Rather a nice name. I like it; I like him too."

"Is this information of a public nature?"

"What do you mean? I don't care who knows it, if I choose to find anything likeable about any man—or woman."

"Oh!" This in a relieved tone, for which mischievous May was now able to assign an exact cause.

"This is our dance. Come along, May."

In the meantime a very different, though equally interesting, conversation was taking place under the broad moonlight that struggled through the elm-branches on to the lawn outside the open windows between two men who were neglecting the dance. Both were, of course, in evening dress, both looked pale and dark in the moonlight, one was taller and slenderer than the other. The shorter and sturdier was absolutely an "arrangement in black and white." His hair bore to his complexion in the moonlight the same colour ratio as his coat to his shirt bosom. A pair of imperturbable-looking gold spectacles clung to his aquiline nose. The former was Carl Corsar, the latter Cyrus Shute. Both were under an elm-tree, and quite unseen by the public. Carl was saying—

"I tell you that I shall not have any hesitation in communicating any suspicion I may feel to Mr. Raynham!"

"Please yourself. May I ask what right you have to suspect anything?"

"My reasons are my own property—till I make them public."

"Guess they're my property too—without your telling. You'd better shake down, young man, and take it easy; it always pays best."

"Take what easy?" replied Carl suddenly.

"Your position," said the other in his imperturbable drawl; "and a very nice position you seem to have got into, it seems to me. Nice young lady, Miss Raynham—seems to appreciate your talents (and talents you have), don't she?"

"What right have you to bring May into the conversation?" asked Carl, angrily forgetting himself.

"Did I bring 'May' into the conversation, sir? No. Respect for ladies was always a marked feature in Cyrus Shute's character."

Carl could have bitten his tongue out, if such an operation had been of any use. He continued, sternly controlling himself—

"You are what is usually described as an adventurer. You

have been given your social passport by one whom I know too well, and your very presence in this country is a ground for keeping a remarkably sharp eye on you, and putting honest people on their guard against you."

Shute's hand went instinctively behind his coat-tail.

"Remember," said Carl, "that that gesture of yours is a threat to an unarmed man, and remember, at the same time, that the excellent invention called the Long Drop is in active use in this country."

"What—in—thunder are you talking about, young man?" replied the American, bringing his hand back—with a yellow silk pocket-handkerchief in it. "Pretty colour, ain't it? I like this bilious, æsthetic business. Say, Mr. Corsar, you've been reading Bret Harte too much—confess?"

Carl felt more and more enraged at this provokingly cool customer. In fact, he never had been reduced to a worse temper in his recollection. Such is the reward of probity. You try to do an honourable action, and it turns and rends you, and makes you, to use Cyrus Shute's expressive phrase, "feel mean."

"Now see here, young man," continued that worthy, "we've been talkin' out here long enough. I don't like to see a clever young man like you make a dam fool of himself."

"I must return your compliment, as far as cleverness goes," returned Carl honestly, though irefully contemplating the calm audacity of this peculiar personage. "It is a case of diamond cut diamond."

"Why, yes. But one diamond cuts, and the other gits cut, and I have convictions as to who's which. Let me give you a word of advice. What can you do? You can say to the boss here: 'You air nussing a viper in your bosom. That viper's front name is Cyrus—among familiars, Cy. My instincts have elected to consider him a viper. He is a fellow-guest of mine. I have no reason for my apparently ungenerous attack on his character, except that he is, as I am, as many people are, acquainted with my father, of whom I may remark, as he is not on the spot just now to defend himself, that I choose to consider him a marked card.' Is that the sort of course for a gentleman of the effete East to take? Now make peace, Mr. Corsar, junior. I don't want to hurt you, which I might, and don't you try to hurt me, which you



can't. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. Any way, wait till they prick you." With this consoling quotation and comment Cyrus Shute moved off, considering negotiations at an end.

Carl followed, saying, " Well, I shall have an eye on you, at all events."

" Right." Cyrus did not add that he would have both his own dark slits gleaming through their glasses on Carl at all convenient and necessary times. He knew Carl would leave the next day, and that his only opportunity of speaking to John Raynham would be that night, so Mr.—or rather Colonel—Cyrus Shute "elected," for reasons of his own, to keep a diligent and unobtrusive watch upon Mr. Corsar, junior. Cyrus generally had reasons for what he did, but, like other clever people, did not always, or even often, divulge them. And he roamed like an inquisitive little bright-eyed animal with short dark fur and neat body round the sides of the dancing-room slowly, till he brought up anon alongside the great Waller. The young people—and others old enough to know better—were executing a waltz and brushed past the two every second. Cyrus's occupation during dinner had been to let the ponderous senator lead the conversation, agree with all his conclusions, and bear them out with supplementary anecdotes, which did credit to the readiness and fertility of his imagination.

" Ha, Colonel ! As this is your first visit to Watermouth we must show you some of our beauties, hay. Dare say you are satiated with beauty, though, judging by the samples you send over to us."

" We export the raw material ; Europe sends back the manufactured article."

" Ha, hay ! Very good. Yes. Or fraudulently detains it, hay ?"

Arthur Raynham said to his partner : " Uncle Waller always says ' hay,' I suppose I should do it if I got into the House. Hereditary house or workhouse—the only ones I'm qualified for, I'm afraid."

Cyrus continued : " There's more beauty in this house than I've seen for quite a while. Any of these your daughters, sir ?"

" Hay ? Er—no—not exactly. Three of them happen to be my—in fact nieces. You met them at dinner."

"Thought there was a family likeness," continued the unabashed Cyrus.

There the dance left off, and the two speakers were separated by the crowd of heated human beings, who poured off in the style of the celebrated Ark procession towards the room where refreshments were to be obtained, and subsequently wandered out of doors, to meet each other accidentally round shrubs, like a game of Puss-in-the-corner, as some artless young thing remarked to Arthur Raynham, who had piloted her round and round the drawing-room diligently for the last quarter of an hour, and been rewarded by a large stain of violet powder on the right lappel of his coat, and several smiles of sweet inanity. I really do not know who the young lady was. I can assure the curious that if she had been of any consequence I should have inquired, and "papers on the subject would have been laid on the table." But Arthur was a flirtivorous animal—or did his best to be—and was always to be found, at dances, in obscure corners, with rather young girls, possessed of a tendency to betray their retreat by sudden and explosive laughter. There are girls who laugh like bottles of effervescing mineral waters. This is mere useful information, not "sarkazzum," as dear Artemus Ward would say.

Sandy and May went, like the rest, out under the moonlight, after a struggle for a cup of tea amongst many elbows and trains. There Carl appeared, was greeted by May, and generously accorded a dance. It was a very curious fact that May had kept all her first dances open on the programme, and only promised away the last seventeen or so (including "extras") to the garrison, &c., who had swarmed round her in the early part of the evening.

Then Sandy said, "May, I must go and dance with your sisters; I will deliver you into the hands of Mr. Corsar," and disappeared.

"I saw you apparently thoroughly enjoying yourself, Miss Raynham," observed Carl, "or I should have spoken to you before."

"Yes. It is so delicious to have a good waltz, before you are tired, with a good partner. I don't know why, but it is. I suppose you will think me silly for saying so."

"Please don't suppose anything of the kind. There are many things we know to be facts that we can't give reasons

for. Half the best things in the world, as well as the worst, can't be accounted for at all."

"I think sometimes it makes a thing more enjoyable if there is some unexplained mystery about it."

"Yes; only you like to have the secrets cleared up at the end of the third volume."

"But there isn't always a third volume in life. There seems to be bits of one's existence like the odd first volumes of Tauchnitz novels which one picks up in some foreign hotel. The person who leaves it there always takes care to take the most interesting part away."

"To leave it at some other hotel you get to long afterwards, or to throw it into the sea when crossing the channel."

"Is that a metaphor?"

"Yes, if you like. The channel is one we all cross, only we don't know that there is anything on the other side of it, for no one has ever come back to tell us."

"What very strange ideas you sometimes have, Mr. Corsar, if you will allow me to say so."

"Not quite my own idea that last, I'm afraid. The beginning of the allegory was yours, the end I borrowed from *Hamlet*."

May thought a little while, and then said, "Must you go away to-morrow?"

"I must. I have things to do in Fenchester. For example, I have to look over papers which will show me in how many different ways a fish's venous system may be described by the undergraduate mind, and how little many of them know what a frog's heart is like, much as they may have studied a woman's. Sounds romantic, doesn't it?"

"I don't think you have much romance in your disposition, Mr. Corsar."

"Don't you? Why?" May had seldom felt before what a very puzzling and exasperating weapon the word "why" can be made in accomplished hands.

"Oh, because you generally use poetry to make fun of, and you said the other day that the liver had more to do with people's emotions than the heart."

"Must one be set down as incapable of romance because one states a simple fact?"

"But your 'simple facts' are always unpleasant, somehow; I suppose because they *are* facts."

"A very good reason. The world is full of extremely awkward facts ; hence the value of imagination, which peoples it with pleasant ones."

"Don't you think it a nice world ? I do."

"At this moment I am not quite sure. It might be made a very nice place for me. But there imagination comes in again."

"You ought to be quite satisfied with things, I'm sure."

"Why?"

"I shall hire some one to assassinate you if you say 'why' much oftener. Because you have plenty to do and can do it. Because you live, I suppose, among great and clever men, and can talk to them every day ; because you are free to do what you like in amusements, and books, and so on."

"And because a very charming melody is being played which we will dance to." And they went in.

Carl felt that he must certainly own to himself that he was very far gone, and he partially deceived himself into the conviction that May's purely sensuous enjoyment of a waltz, which Carl was keen enough to perceive but not to interpret correctly, had some stronger reference to the individuality of her partner than the mere fact that he was a man with an ear for time and tune.

"By Jove!" he thought to himself, forgetting realities in a flight of dream pictures, "I should have to work twice as hard. Dare say I could get a Manchester or Birmingham professorship. What idiots those founders of fellowships were to make celibacy a condition. What a charming society there might be in Audit if you could keep your wife in college. Thelema Abbey would be a fool to it. What gorgeous hall-dinners and what dances one could have! I must suggest some of these points to the commissioners. Woman's true mission, to civilise dons and undergraduates—not before it was needed either."

When the dance had been danced out to its gasping conclusion, Carl and May again walked out of doors like the rest of the world.

"I have one advantage over these people," said May.

"Only one?"

"I mean that I know the way about here, which no one else does except my sisters and Arthur. I want to catch cold, if it is possible on such a warm night—I think it must be going to



thunder—by sitting under the lawn elm trees. There is a bench round one tree, here, just beyond the windows. We have afternoon tea here often."

"What a grand retreat."

"And the two sat down, and leaned against the large bole of the elm, quite unaware that the stealthy little American had followed them, and seated himself placidly on the other side of the elm.

May fanned herself, and said, "That was a good dance, wasn't it?"

"It was. I think I shall dream about it."

"I dare say I shall. I always dream after dancing."

"Do you? I wonder what they will be like on this occasion. But I must remember that I shall as likely as not never dance with you again. I must thank you and your people for helping to make me pass one of the happiest weeks in my life—thanks, of course, to our good friend Sandy, in the first place."

"I am so glad you like being here; how awfully quick the time has gone."

"It always does when you want it to go slow, and unfortunately there is no way of putting the brake on to it."

"Do you know that Sandy tried to describe you to me before we went to Fenchester?"

"Really. Did he do it well?"

"Not badly; though there was a good deal he might have said which he did not."

"I suppose I mustn't ask further questions?"

"No; I will say, however, that he made me feel rather afraid of you when you first came into his rooms."

"When I first came. Seems a long time ago, doesn't it? I hope you have since got rid of that impression."

"Oh, rather! Or I shouldn't quietly and persistently talk all my nonsense to you in the way I do, forgetting that you are a don—a creature I have vaguely tried to realise from books. Are dons often like you?"

"I fancy not. What a beautiful night it is; it seems a pity one's dancing can't be done out of doors, where it would be so much wholesomer."

"Wouldn't it be rather like the Walpurgis Night?"

"I have not attended many. I dare say it would." Then a pause, after which Carl added suddenly, "I wish I could control my habit of making inconsequential remarks when I

particularly want to concentrate my conversation on the one thing my mind is full of. Before I go, Miss Raynham, I want to tell you several things. First of all, I should like to see your father, and thank him for all his kindness. I am glad to have been able to know him. Now, however, let me thank you for yours. You have given a new light to the life of a man who, I fancy, would otherwise have drifted into an old don, believing in good dinners, frog's hearts, and no one else's. As you say, they left out the romantic part when they made me, and poured in a double dose of the material."

"I *didn't* say that Mr. Corsar."

"Well, you might have. I have been left to do my own fight in life since I was a boy, and am, consequently, not a very spotless specimen of humanity—not the sort you might care to keep in a cabinet with glass doors—nor have I picked up very high opinions of mankind as a whole, including myself. I have not had much chance in the social way. All my best friends are men, and I don't mind telling you in confidence that I have hardly ever before my advent here had more than half an hour's conversation with what we call in England a real lady in my life."

"I should never have guessed that if you had not told me."

"Very good of you to say so; so you must excuse me if I talk to you much as I would to a man."

"Why, it's rather a compliment than otherwise."

"Is it? Glad you see it in that light. At the same time I strongly realise, to put it mildly, the fact that you are not a man, and have lived in a world which is, as you called it, a nice world, and very unlike mine and other people's. I—I wish to goodness somebody had taught me to speak my own mind to ladies. Here I have been plunging about like a bull in a net of roundabout phrases, which can only be boring you."

"You are not boring me," said May in a low, kind voice; "but I don't exactly understand yet what your difficulty is. I am very glad to have known you, because you *do* talk as if I were a man, and not as if I were a fool, as so many gentlemen treat me; and I shall not forget you."

May spoke quietly and honestly, without the shadow of an attempt at flirtation.

"You were telling me why I ought to enjoy this world," said Carl, "and I said I might enjoy it very much if my

imagination had its way. That assertion of mine was true beyond all joking. If I could have my own way—there! I must say it—I should tell you, May Raynham, that all the beauty, real and potential, of my life was put into it when I saw you. I am a man used to control my passions, but for once they are too much for me. I hope—I think I am not doing an unworthy action in talking to you like this. I hope you are not offended—I don't mean to be offensive—but I love you, May, beyond all things and people. If I can give you a decent home will you share it, and help to make a more romantic and altogether higher sort of man of me? You can do it. No one else can. I have lived a good deal longer in the world than you, and know it pretty well. I think I could do a little in the guiding and protecting line for you, but not so much as you could for me. Selfish, aren't I? If I talk in this tone don't think I don't mean what I say, because I use the language I do. I wish I knew better," and Carl laughed a very sad laugh. "Tell me, can this be—yes or no?" and the keen, pale face looked eagerly at May's very sad one.

"Mr. Corsar, I'm not offended. I think you man enough not to want any circumlocution. I must say no. I'm very sorry; I like you very much, and don't want to lose you, but—you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. All right. Let us forget all about it. There is no hope?"

"No, no. I'm horribly sorry."

"Don't be sorry. You can't help it, neither can I. Look upon me as one who is your friend, and is ready to chaff and dance as before, and tell you stories about frog's hearts, eh? Ha! ha!" And Carl breathed hard.

The still figure on the other side of the elm smiled a curious little philosophical smile, and looked at something it held.

"Before we go in let me tell you something; I meant to tell your father, but I may not see him."

The figure behind the elm walked away a few noiseless paces on the grass, and waited in the background.

"There is a danger I have a hint of threatening your father. My warning may be of some use; it is a painful one for me to give, but——"

The figure in the background advanced, with audible, crunching steps, and remarked:—

"Sorry to disturb you. Mr. Corsar, sir, I've been looking

for you everywhere. A servant gave me this telegram to deliver to you." Here Sandy appeared and demanded May for a dance.

"*Au revoir*, Mr. Corsar," said she.

"Good-bye," said Carl, "I may see you again."

May and Sandy disappeared into the light and crowd, leaving Carl alone with the scent of the summer night, the music of the distant waltz in his ears, an oblong yellow envelope in his hands. The American had vanished. Carl tore open the telegram as one does tear open telegrams, without noticing whether it had been tampered with, and read by the moon's aid, "I am ill. Come to me at once. Jenny." Then he stretched his arms, yawned, took a deep inspiration, and ejaculated in a low and concentrated voice, "Damnation and hell!" Then he laughed, and said, "Poor little Jenny! Wonder what's wrong with her. Carl Corsar, Esquire, you have made an ass of yourself; make the best of a bad job."

And he turned round on his heel and walked into the house, his hands in his trouser pockets, crumpling that telegram. Failing to find John Raynham, he told Ethel, whom he discovered, not dancing, but sitting on a staircase with Cameron (every step of that staircase was impassable with recumbent, fan-working humanity), that he was obliged to leave, and hoped she would convey his messages of apology and thanksgiving to her parents.

"Oh, yes; of course. I'm so sorry you have to go," said Ethel, rising and shaking hands.

Then Carl discovered his hat with much difficulty, and looked at his watch. "Quarter past eleven. I say—you" (to a passing footman), "when does the last train leave Watermouth for London?"

"Eleven forty, sir." Carl ran briskly to his bedroom, and found Miklos on a landing. "Ah! you are just the man I want. I have to leave by the 11.40. Will you tell Mr. Maxwell I'm obliged to go suddenly—had a telegram from town—see."

"I understand you, sir; I will pack for you," and the tall Greco-Rouman went noiselessly up the stairs, lighted Carl's candles, and packed his dress suit expeditiously, while Carl was dressing in another suit, and putting on his ulster.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Carl, as he sucked at an empty



clay pipe, and felt in his pockets, "I've used all my tobacco, and the station bar will be shut. I'm like Sisera, whom the stars in their courses fought against."

"What is your tobacco, sir?" asked Miklos Debrecza.

"Cavendish."

"Permit me to offer you the service of mine. It is caporal."

"Thanks ever so much. I'll take a pipe or two."

"Take the pouch, sir."

"No thanks. I'll put some in mine."

Miklos shouldered the portmanteau without waiting for orders, and the two started.

At Watermouth Station Carl would have given Mike money, but he said, "I take no money from my master's friends." (Hear, O Flunkeydom, and be abashed!)

"Damn it then, shake hands!" The dark eyes gleamed pleasantly, and a lean, strong, brown hand grasped Carl's thin and pale one.

"A word in your ear, Miklos. Your master and every one here believe in that Yankee, Shute. Keep your eye on him. Good-bye." And Carl got into his third-class smoking carriage.

Mike remained on the platform till the train started, gave the military salute, and went leisurely about the town, well knowing that his master would be well occupied till after dawn, and sought quiet little amusements such as old campaigners like Miklos know how to find.

Carl had his compartment to himself, and his reflections as he smoked that caporal for two or three hours were strange, confused, and rapid, like the noise and motion of the train. And he read the crumpled telegram again: "I am ill. Come to me at once. Jenny."

## CHAPTER XI.

JENNY.

“Doch stets verfolgen die Blicke  
Der schönen Frau mich überall,  
Sie winken : Komm’ zurücke !”

AND almost into Tannhäuser the noble knight's embarrassing situation had Carl Corsar got himself, without the privilege of papal forgiveness or even condemnation. It is perhaps degrading for a fellow of Audit, an evolutionist, a new light, a practical reformer, and the incarnation of hard reason, to have to confess that he was the slave of a salad-day romance, whose fetters of faded roses, old scents and songs, were stronger than any tie of law, duty, or blood. But he was not in the frequent habit of confessing anything of the kind. He had made one great struggle to break up the past and forget the whole thing, which struggle had ended in the “whole thing” refusing to be in any way forgotten. And then he came to the conclusion (like Tannhäuser again) that, after all, it was not such a bad thing if the best be made of it; and what further came of that we shall see.

The situation came about thuswise. One summer vacation, when Sandy had finished his three freshman's terms, and Carl had not long ago taken his degree, the two went on what they described as a “reading party.” I say they described it as a reading party; they took not a single book, except a map and a copy of “Sandy Bar” on the part of Carl. The luggage consisted of about three pounds of tobacco, several pipes, a guitar in a case, a carpet-bag, and really, if I remember rightly, that was all. They wore flannel clothes, and did a good deal of their journeyings in sundry boats and barges. The proprietors of the said barges Sandy vastly entertained with his guitar, and both he and Carl showed themselves no mean adepts at the kind of conversation peculiar to plyers of barge-poles.

They had a spell of wonderfully still hot weather, and as often as not camped out under overcoats, instead of using stuffy little bedrooms in ancient village inns. The part of England they were in is not of great consequence. It was not very remote from Fenchester, and was of a somewhat level, almost monotonous description, possessing many beautiful groves and woods, many picturesque old villages and small towns, and a splendid stretch of horizon where sunrises and sunset took place that few other districts could rival. As I implied, most of the journey was done in boats, or on foot, along the river Ox, halts being made at occasional villages and towns, where provisions, &c., were purchased if necessary.

One evening, after pulling slowly through intervals of green shade and broad glare, all the long hot hours of a July afternoon, the yellow mist of the sunset straight ahead (their temporary direction was westward, owing to a curve of the river) fell on the roofs, trees, and steeple of a small, very old, interesting town, once the site of a Roman, subsequently of a Danish fort. The Danes had never been turned out of it either, and the descendants of the stout sea-kings had furnished from this little town-village twenty trusty troopers of the Ironside order, who had contributed not a little to the success of the struggle for liberty of the seventeenth century. This place was discovered by Sandy and Carl on the map, where it was labelled "Snorham."

"How beautiful it looks—yon town the evening sun is shining on. I wonder what is in it?" said Sandy.

"Wonder what sort of beer they have? I'm damned if I was ever so thirsty in my life," was the romantic reply.

Both ceased rowing, and let the stream take the boat slowly on. Carl put on his "blazer" (did I mention that a blazer was a flannel jacket?) and lit a short clay pipe. The western sky gradually spread itself out in soft bars of crimson, rubbed apparently (with cloud-brushes dipped in a rainbow) on a yellow-green background. Snorham had scraps of old wall and buttresses standing where the river entered it. These and the bulk of the town were of mouldering, deeply discoloured red brick.

"Just the colour of Queen's at Cambridge," observed Carl. "Were you ever at Cambridge, Sandy?"

"Never. One 'Varsity in England is enough for me."

"I was there last October, examining for the Science Local or something. I'd like to have Queen's for a private residence, to fill with good fellows of both sexes. It would be quite equal to Thelema Abbey. I was there in the early autumn, when the trees appertaining to the College Gardens were the show thing—grand place for spooning in, and the men quite seemed to see them in that light."

"Sensible men. What a grand colour this place is just now! Let's land."

"Land? Rather! No more pulling for me to-day."

So they delivered their boat into the care of a loafer of aquatic appearance, and walked into the town. A long, straggling, dead-level, red-brick-and-tile street led them to a small market-place, where no particular market ever went on, with an ancient and very dry stone fountain in its centre. This they examined, and passed on. At the outskirt of the town, at the end of the High Street, a large and ancient inn appeared, with creepers climbing its red and brown walls, and tufts of moss and grass enough to feed a cow sprouting on the roof. This was labelled "The Ship John Sandham licensed to sell by retail Ale Spirits Wine and Tobacco Good Beds," with the usual absence of punctuation.

"Carl, we go in here—*et fortuna sequatur.*"

The two travellers entered, deposited their bags on the passage floor, and waited. In front of them was a flight of carpetless wooden stairs, with those heavy balusters and angular frequent landings peculiar to old staircases. Over these balusters suddenly looked the leaning figure of a young girl—and such a young girl! All the Snorham damsels Carl and Sandy had had opportunities in the last ten minutes of studying possessed rubicund faces and yellow hair, also sturdy bodies and red muscular arms, that suggested frequent exercise and exposure in or near the river. This sudden vision was an entire contrast to these. A small head of dark hair terminating posteriorly in a plaited tail, with a small loose expansion at its end (somewhere below the waist), set off a skin of a delicate warm tawny colour, rather warmer and rather less tawny on the cheeks. Two large dark-blue eyes, an ordinary inconspicuous nose, and an indescribably attractive mouth over a rather provoking little chin, completed the facial part of this pleasing picture. Carl and Sandy had just time to partially take in these facts, and give a quaint and bewildered



glance at one another, when this small person came downstairs with some rapidity, and said,

"You want father? He's asleep. He's generally asleep after supper." (This was near nine o'clock on a summer evening.) "I'll go and wake him up." And the young beauty disappeared.

"I say, Sandy!—Snorham's a funny place, isn't it?"

"Isn't it?" And the two looked into each other's eyes, and saw a curious silent laugh in each.

"Father," *i.e.* John Sandham, licensed to retail &c., turned up, looking red and slightly confused, as a man has a right to look who has had a heavy meal, with plenty of beer, and gone to sleep after it with a pipe in his mouth and the day-before-yesterday's paper in his lap. A large, not uncomely, fair-haired, bearded, sun-tanned man, perhaps a little too fond of beer and hot gin-and-water.

"Two beds, sir? Yes, of course. Jenny, show the gentlemen up-stairs, and carry their bags; give 'em the big room on the first-floor. There's no one staying in the house, sir, but ourselves, so you can have the best room."

"Thanks," said Carl, who was chief speaker. "I have no doubt we shall do very well." And this energetic host disappeared to finish his interrupted repose.

Miss Jenny seized the two bags with two small hands, and said, "Will you come with me, please?"

"Yes," said Carl; "but we don't let a child like you carry our things, when we can carry them ourselves."

"I'm not a child, and I always carry the things when there is anybody here, which isn't often."

"I apologise for calling you a child. I see now I made a mistake. But give me the bags."

"Thanks." And Miss Sandham led them into a large low bedroom with two beds, and lattice windows looking toward the sunset, which had by this faded into a few long, leaden streaks on a gleaming pale ground.

"This will do beautifully, Sandy; won't it?"

"Rather."

The girl had opened the window and was looking at the sky. Then she turned round, and, for some reason or other, selecting Carl as the proper person to speak to, said, "Would you like some supper?"

"We should, very much. We have been walking and

rowing all the way from Fenchester for the last three days and sleeping out of doors, and all sorts of things, and we have terrible appetites."

"Are you students from Fenchester?" This with a little curiosity, and a glance of approval at Carl's face and becoming costume of dark blue and white flannel.

"We are. It is our holidays, and we are idling together."

"How awfully nice it must be! And do you go just where you like, and stay as long as you like?"

"Within certain limits, yes."

"You see," said Sandy, who considered himself entitled to have some share in the conversation, "it depends on how we like a place how long we stay at it."

"What would you like for supper?" Again to Carl.

"What can we have?"

"Oh, I don't know. You see hardly anybody ever comes here to stay. The customers are town men, and boatmen and bargemen, who come to the bar. I don't serve them."

"I should think not."

"Let me see; would you like some eggs?"

"Yes; we would like some eggs, wouldn't we, Sandy?"

"Anything mademoiselle can give us."

"Are you French?" said the girl, quickly turning to Sandy.

"I'm more French than anything else. I have been in most places, though."

Then Miss Jenny, leaning back with her hands behind her on the corner of the washstand, and, looking up again at Carl, said, "How many eggs shall I do you—two?"

"Eight, please, and have you any ham or bacon?"

"Oh, I forgot you are men, and you have been rowing. I never take more than one egg at once."

"We only take them one at a time; but we like taking several one after the other. Where shall we find them?"

"Oh, I shall hear you come down-stairs. I'll show you."

And the girl disappeared. Sandy and Carl plunged themselves into large basins, and did a good deal of splashing and soaping and towelling, and brushed their hair neatly before a small glass (which represented their faces distorted and pale green), Sandy in front, Carl behind, taking peeps over the other's shoulder. Then they put on two brown shooting-coats from their bag, which did duty as evening dress, and marched

down-stairs. The girl Jenny was waiting for them, with small white arms bare, and brandishing a saucepan, while a robust girl in a print dress, of the red and flaxen order, stared open-eyed at the two strangers.

"Look, this is the parlour. I've laid the cloth and things, and the eggs and bacon will be dished as soon as Emma remembers that they are on the fire. You must excuse Emma; she doesn't often see strangers."

Emma vanished, blushing and giggling, while Jenny looked at her rather scornfully, and soon emerged from what appeared to be the kitchen door, bearing a mighty dish of eggs and ham, whose steam Sandy and Carl followed like hounds. When they sat down Jenny proceeded to hand plates and cut bread, and generally perform menial offices, which Carl and Sandy somewhat protested against.

"Oh, but I must; I'm landlady and chambermaid and waiter, and Emma is cook and boots—especially boots. Father is the sleeping partner."

"Where did you pick up the habit of sarcasm, Miss Sandham?" asked Carl.

"I didn't mean to be sarcastic; I can't help saying what I think of people sometimes."

"By Jove! I'll ask you some day for an opinion. I like candour in that line."

"You might not like it, old boy, though," said Sandy, laughing.

"Why not?" replied the girl quickly.

She evidently felt herself commissioned to defend Carl against his companion, who laughed, and said, "We'll see."

"What would you like to drink?"

"I say beer, don't you, Carl? You were making eloquent remarks about it a while ago."

"I say beer, too. Will you be kind enough to get us a quart of ale, Miss Sandham?"

Miss Sandham gave one comprehensive glance of the blue eyes at the two sunburnt incarnations of thirst before her, and left the room, presently returning carrying a large foaming pewter of a liberal quart's calibre in both hands. "I hope I haven't spilt any. Shall I pour it out?"

"On no account, fair Hebe. Hand it over," and Sandy took a long, silent pull at the pewter, sighed, wiped the foam from his lips, and handed it on to Carl. When Carl had

satisfied himself he held out the pewter to Jenny and said, "Look!"

Jenny looked in. There was a spot of froth at the bottom the size of a shilling—*et præterea nihil*.

"Well done, both of you, you must be thirsty."

"We are—at least we were a moment ago. That is very good ale, Miss Sandham," said Carl.

"Don't call me Miss Sandham. Nobody ever did except a horrid old schoolmistress. Every one calls me Jenny."

"Where was your school—here?"

"No, at Yarmouth. I get my dresses and boots and gloves and accomplishments there. You can't get them here."

"So you were at a boarding-school at Yarmouth."

"I was. I learned very little except to read novels, and play one or two waltzes. They couldn't have taught me much if I had worked, but I didn't work. The other girls liked me well enough, and I liked some of them, but they were rather silly mostly. They cared more about chocolate creams than a sunset in the sea. I saw the sea there for the first time, you know. I dare say you are used to it, but I think it is one of the most splendid things in the world."

"I am not sure that I don't prefer the chocolate creams," said Carl; "and when did your schooling end?"

"About a year and a half ago. Miss Winter—that's the mistress—gave me a punishment I didn't deserve, so I told her I wasn't going to do it. Then she sent me to my room and refused me any meals, so I went away early the next morning by the train before any one in the house was up, and left a note telling them they might forward my luggage here. That was the last of my schooling. Then my sister got married, and mother being dead some time, I have to do the house."

"I commend your decision. I dare say you were quite right. I was wondering where you got your clothes from. I shouldn't think neat boots and frocks like yours grew in Snorham in large quantities. Will you allow me to ask how old you are, Jenny?"

"Seventeen and a-half."

"Ah! Well, you have life enough before you yet."

"Don't get much fun here, do you?" asked Sandy.

"No, nothing but stupid walks or sculling by myself. I've got some books, and a ridiculous old piano in the corner there. Can you play?"



"A little," said Carl. "My friend here has got a guitar. Shall we play to you?"

"Oh! do, please. Father's in the bar now; and he won't hear, or care if he did."

"Well, we will do our best. We have had an excellent supper. Is it allowed to smoke here?"

"Of course, if you like."

"Very well; Sandy, trot up-stairs and get the pipes and the guitar."

When Sandy was gone, Jenny, who was waiting about, apparently making up her mind to clear the table, said to Carl suddenly, "Tell me your name?"

"Carl Corsar."

"What a curious name! Are you foreign?"

"Not at all; I'm as English as you are."

"I'm not quite English."

"Indeed; what are you?"

"My mother was from the west of Ireland, descended from Spanish people who got there somehow. I never learned my history properly—my English history I mean."

"Ah! that accounts for the difference between you and the other people about here."

"Do you think I'm different?"

"Of course I do. You don't mean to say you thought yourself like Emma hitherto? You've been at school too long to be as artless as all that, though the looking-glass up-stairs is green, and gives one a crooked mouth. Ah! here's Sandy with the things. Now you may sit down, and applaud at the right moments."

Carl and Sandy lit their pipes, the latter observing, "When you were at school, Miss Jenny, did you never smoke cigarettes—in strict privacy I mean—at the same period that you revelled in the forbidden lamp, the forbidden jam, and the much more forbidden *Ouida*?"

"Where did you learn all that?" replied the rather self-conscious and laughing Jenny.

"Oh! I'm a kind of sorcerer. Look, we shan't be the least shocked or surprised if you like to take one of my cigarettes."

"Won't you? Are you sure you won't think worse of me for it?"

"If you don't think worse of yourself, Jenny," said Carl, "what does it matter what other people think?"

"Oh! but it does," was the unanswerable assertion founded on one of those instructive convictions that take the place of reasoned ethics in the mind feminine.

However, rightly or wrongly, Jenny had her cigarette in fear and trembling, and rather enjoyed it, I regret to say, while Carl, shaking out imaginary "back hair," sat before the curious, ancient, much-strummed-on piano, and drew music out of it that made Jenny sit still, with her eyes wide open, wondering how it was that the superannuated wires had never produced such melody before in her memory since her Irish mother had died, who had, certainly, much harmony in her nature, and a merry, ballad-singing disposition. Sandy turned up his moustaches, sat in his most effective troubadour attitude, and twanged the guitar. Then Sandy sang the song, "Es zogen drei Burschen wohl über den Rhein."

Jenny appreciated the tune and asked what it was about, and Sandy told her how the three students went to the Rhine Hostelry, and the pretty, pathetic tragedy that took place there, and what they all said. Jenny was silent. Carl looked at Sandy, and began to wander off into melodious stories without words of his own, as was often his habit, till Jenny said to him:—

"You sing me something I can understand."

Then out of half jocular compliment to the young hostess, Sandy, of course, not appreciating that fact, Carl gave that plaintively ferocious song, of which the refrain was enough by itself to breed vengeance for all Ireland's wrongs, real or imaginary—

"For they're hanging men and women  
For the wearing of the green!"

Then a step of some weight being heard in the passage, Jenny began in the most busy manner to clear the table in a concentrated style, calculated to show that all her mind and all her energies were devoted to the one object of becoming an efficient parlour-maid. Carl and Sandy, at their remote musical corner of the room, carefully ignored her presence, and thus were the three "discovered" when John Sandham entered in high good humour, the result of potations at the expense of his bar guests. This careful parent observed—

"Ah, that's right, Jenny; you may go to bed when you've done."

"All right, father." Exit Jenny with table cloth and tray.

"Now gentlemen, you'll take a drop o' something hot with me. I'm glad you've been able to get some noise out of that old pianofort. Sometime back—year come next fall—there was one or two commercial gentlemen here what played and sang, and we had quite a lively little evening. Me and my girl Jenny enjoyed ourselves proper that time. She likes music, my maid does ; so do I."

Carl ground his teeth at these remarks, and accepted Mr. Sandham's invitation to take something hot, with thanks. Sandy followed suit.

The landlord detained them for the next hour with terrible old stories of his own, pointless, and in the last stage of decomposition. He did all the laughing himself in the right places, and his guests followed suit with an effort. Poor old Sandham was very glad to catch any one who had not heard his store of anecdotes before. Then he asked if Carl and Sandy could put him up to anything good in the way of "chaff and 'aye down Fenchester wye," with that revolting pronunciation peculiar to parts of East Anglia. Carl said he was no authority on hay, but that there was plenty of chaff going about in Fenchester, superior, he was told, to what existed in Snorham.

Then the worthy Sandham, after exhausting all the "Tales of my landlord," and nearly reducing his guests to gibbering imbecility thereby, and discussing racehorses, of which they knew nothing but assumed a deep acquaintance, and finally asking if they were sure they wouldn't "tyke a drop more of something hot," bade them good-night, and went on his way rejoicing.

"Isn't it extraordinary, Sandy, that that old boor should have such a daughter, and seem to take it as a perfectly natural every-day fact?"

"It is. My friend, '*Tu te brûles à la chandelle.*'"

"It is a very curious fact, and one I have often noticed, that if there are two men, and a girl takes an evident fancy to—the more preferable of them, the other begins to enunciate a series of copy-book maxims on the general instability of things, more especially on the disadvantages of the passion called love and the misfortunes it usually brings, though he, perhaps, may have spent the whole of his previous conscious

existence in tumbling in and out of the shallows surrounding Cytherean isles. Selah."

"Yes, but I (I presume you wouldn't waste all that rot on any one but me) have stuck to the shallows up to now, at any rate, while I instinctively guess at a deep when I see it, as now."

"And you'd instinctively plunge into a deep if you got a chance, and you know you would. So go to bed, and be damned."

And they chased each other up the solid old staircase like two schoolboys, and what is known as a "bally-rag" took place in the large, low, old bedroom, and shocked the good, respectable, fusty old chairs and bed terribly. Those articles of furniture had never accommodated human beings since the late Mrs. Sandham died in the room. People of a certain class like their relatives to die in the "best bedroom." John Sandham belonged to this class. His poor, pretty, lazy, untidy wife didn't care if she died on the "kitchen flure," and would have been quite happy there if a few ducks and a pig had been allowed to nurse her. John looked at matters in a very different light, of course, as a solid, respectable East Anglian should, and gave her a funeral, "the best that money could get," and the pride of Snorham long after. "I should have laughed myself into fits if I hadn't been crying, and it had been any one else's hearse but our own," said poor Jenny, writing to a school "pal;" "but father seemed to enjoy it, so I didn't like to say anything."

And so it came to pass that Carl and Sandy used the best bedroom, where Jenny's mother had died, and where the Sandham family went when they wanted to die from time immemorial, even if they had to turn out a visitor for the purpose. And they had as sound and undisturbed a sleep as might be expected after a summer day of hard exercise, a good plain supper, and a quart of ale; and ghosts of diseased Sandhams did not visit them. Carl would have told them to go and be damned (a mean thing—a cruel thing to say to most ghosts), and Sandy would never have awoke if twelve full-sized, heavy-weight champion spectres had come in and gibbered, and danced the houlachan in three sets with ghostly yelps.

The next day a lazy little paddle was done on the river, instead of the customary daily journey of several miles. Jenny sat in the stern of the boat. "With her father's approval?"



you ask. No, without it. Jenny had not a remarkably deep-seated reverence for her father, nor, for the matter of that, had any one else. His was not a profound, a farsighted, or determined character, and every one knew it. Every one liked him, and no one respected him. Even his daughter sometimes called him by his front name, as if he were a contemporary and companion.

To make a rather long story rather shorter, I will say that there happened what might be reasonably anticipated under the circumstances. Given an independent, inexperienced, motherless, self-willed girl, very young, of great personal attractions, and a natural liking for refinement, art, and nature, none of which she has much opportunity, under present circumstances, of enjoying; given also a good-looking, young university man of considerable "parts," of large human experience, possessing a clever tongue, a manly, natural, and genuine disposition, a handsome face, a tenor voice, and a strong sense of the ridiculous; given also very strong internal capacity for volcanic and sensuous passions on the part of both the above, what do you expect to happen?

What did happen was, that Carl and Sandy stayed a whole week at Snorham, an unprecedented length of time for any one station on their tour, and found at the end of that week that they had just cash enough to set them once more on the Audit Boat Club steps at Fenchester. So they proceeded against the sluggish stream of the Ox, and laboured their way back to those pleasant rooms of Sandy's in Audit, where they wore flannel clothes daily, and smoked tobacco, drank shandygaff and Pilsener lager beer, and talked long and profoundly.

The next vacation Sandy went to London, and was ignorant of Carl's proceedings until the beginning of the next term, when he extracted from that young man the gradually and reluctantly emitted confession that he had taken the train from Fenchester to Wainleycotham, an East Anglian station (they often have names like that), distant from Snorham some six miles of dead-level fields, diversified with occasional ditches; that he had resided partly at one of these towns, partly at the other. Also that in the flamy, foggy, fenland sunsets of a winter afternoon two dark figures of different sexes might have been seen (and were seen by occasional labourers, who gave greetings in unintelligible East English) walking

over the limitless plain, leaning on casual gates or trees to study the limitless view, and the occasional red-tiled roofs or crooked, peeled-carrot steeple of some distant hamlet; after which they would slowly stroll back while the long twilight deepened and the great red moon rose in wreaths of yellow cloud, and grew smaller and paler, and made reflections in the black fen ditches, that one of the two travellers (to pursue the style of G. P. R. J.) compared to curling silver snakes ascending and descending.

"Wish they were," replied the other, who chewed quietly at a cigar. "I'd nail the silver with a landing-net, and chance the snakes."

"Nasty old thing! Spoiling my lovely comparison like that."

"I say, Jenny, it's time I took you home, or Snorham tongues will talk of you."

"I don't care."

"But doesn't it occur to you that I *do* care?"

"I'd like to walk about under the moon all night."

"Did you ever have ague or rheumatic fever?"

"No. Why?"

"Oh, never mind why. I thought you might have had them, and liked them. There's no knowing how people look at life in this funny part of England."

"What part of England were you born in?"

"The part called London."

"I'd like to go there awfully. I have had a perfectly hateful time here ever since last summer."

"Hateful—why?" This young man knows perfectly well why, but wants to be told again. Degrading position for rising young lecturer and Don-Presumptive, is it not?

"Oh, you know why!"

Here the two figures become indistinctly separable in the growing twilight, and remain so for a considerable period of the journey, hurrying back to Snorham at the rate of about a quarter of a mile in half an hour.

It is very old "business," and very old parts, but the scene, and one at least of the actors, was fresh. Both enjoyed themselves very thoroughly, and were rather like two grown-up children. They were also under the illusion, common, I am told, in such cases, that their proceedings were of a profoundly secret nature. And so on. And Jenny read poetry and novels lent by Carl; and Carl smoked, and played the piano by him-

self at dead of night in the commercial-room of the Wainley-cotham (pronounced, of course, Wy'cottum) Railway Hotel.

It was a very ancient and recognisable state of things, a very old tune, never played out, to whose music the world turns round and the spheres march on, the poets write, the birds sing, and "casual human beings make damned fools of themselves," as Carl finished the above sentence, which is only a quotation from the mouth of a friend of his, who ventured to comment on his conduct. And this very old tune, this very same old game, may be played quite as well in East Anglia as anywhere else.

The resentful contempt for common minds, common notions and common errors peculiar to persons of strong individuality of character, the intense passions for freedom and independence of mind and body, and the power of putting these into strong, clear, and often witty words, were not the least of the attractions Jenny Sandham found in Carl Corsar. He applauded and made clearer to her, views and ideas commended by her own instinct and reason, which such friends as she might accidentally possess at Snorham held in that authoritative reprobation which admits of no questioning and gives no reasons, and is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the British lower middle class. Jenny had a mind, although, perhaps, her boarding-school education had done little towards the cultivation of it, and Carl "teazed" out this mind quite as he would have teased out a bundle of connective tissue fibres. And very nice and strong the fibres were, and tolerably clean—much cleaner than his own mental fibres, on the whole, he thought rather sadly.

And that winter Jenny's eighteenth birthday arrived—the 31st December.

And on that 31st December she wondered (of course) what would happen the next year to her. Also on that day her married sister and a friend of hers made themselves very pleasantly instructive by giving her a discourse on the proprieties, lasting some three quarters of an hour, especially on the heinousness of a young girl having a lover who used the normal aspirates, and didn't say "I" when he meant "hay" (which would very naturally have been his principal topic of conversation to a young girl). They did not exactly state their views in the above words, but in a far more diffuse, tautological, vehement and generally irritant form, to which



Jenny made the pithy, conclusive, but equally irritating reply—"Rubbish!" Jenny could not see why she should not be allowed to enjoy her hitherto not very enjoyable life in her own way. She could not see the criminality of being a good deal more intelligent, a great deal better looking, and at this moment far happier than her female friends and advisers.

That is the way she put it, at least. She could not help the above facts, nor, of course, would she if she could. She was what circumstances had made her, and the world would be a nice place if circumstances would kindly make a few more of her. The supply is not equal to the demand. For example—Sandy knew Jenny; Carl knew Jenny; so did sundry large, red-looking young East Anglians, who wore shiny black clothes on Sundays, and discussed tumblers of something hot with old John. These mostly adored Jenny at one time or another. At first she had those beaming eyes of Lesbia, of which it is difficult to say with exactness on whom they were beaming. You see she had to differentiate between these various new samples of the genus man, at first similar from absolute novelty. This was a work of time; she put them into a mental basket and shook them up, and Carl came uppermost, and a very good *sortilegia* too.

This little digression may be useful in covering the time between December 31st, Jenny's eighteenth birthday, and July six months after, when John ~~Rayham~~ took a drop too many of something hot and slept more profoundly than usual after it, in fact he has not yet slept off the effect of a life of dinner, supper, drop of something hot, and immediate slumber. They thought he would be more comfortable in the old churchyard, so they laid him there. He never perceived the change, and has made no complaints. His son-in-law sails the "Ship" now. This son-in-law, and his wife, and his wife's friends, and his own female relations made the once quiet and placid old ship or old hulk of John Sandham a cross between a galley and a slave dhow to Jenny. *Sandham*

If they had contented themselves with merely cutting away all the nasty untidy clematis, ivy and Virginian vine that hung about the old inn and harboured spiders and other evil beasts, and ruined the stability of the house; if they had only covered the old wooden balustrades and panels with nice fresh paint, and put a nice new-fashioned grate into the old parlour fire-hearth, and decorated that grate with an interesting arrange-



ment in blue and pink and gold, consisting mainly of paper shavings ; in fact, if they had confined themselves to putting the house into a thorough state of repair, " and not a day too soon," and " cheap at the money too," Jenny could have accepted the situation ; but her sister, older and plainer than herself—a good deal older and plainer—was aggressive. She " told her so " and said, " There ! I always said so ! " She remarked, " Well ! how you ever can ! " and other potent and pregnant axioms of Common-Place.

This made Jenny's habitually independent self rebellious, and drove her into exaggerated displays of self-will. She was " nagged " at for coming down to breakfast at nine instead of eight ; next day she came at twelve, and got the girl, Emma, now her only ally and slave, and that furtively, to give her a fresh, new, and far better breakfast in the kitchen than she would have had at eight in the parlour. This being discovered, Emma went, with weeping and declamation, married a ruddy giant in a guernsey shirt and corduroys, and kept an opposition tavern.

The ultimate result was that Jenny, on receipt of the next quarterly instalment of a microscopic legacy, took a second-class ticket at Wainleycotham for Liverpool Street.

## CHAPTER XII.

### JENNY—FURTHER.

JENNY SANDHAM's sudden resolve, and consequent pilgrimage to London, may, as far as its basis in reason is concerned, be fairly compared to the action of one who takes a header into the maelström to avoid the annoyance of a flock of shore mosquitoes. It was one with the less risky proceeding of suddenly "bolting" from a second-rate and doubtless disagreeable boarding school to her home. She had a small fortune of ten pounds sterling, and chattels to the extent of the clothes she wore, a new ulster, a watch, a photograph of Carl Corsar, and a small portmanteau, so small that she had carried it with her own strong and shapely little hands to the outskirts of Snorham, and had there requisitioned a rustic youth for the consideration of one shilling to carry it for her to Wainleycotham station.

Her purpose, when in London, was to obtain employment of some kind, that would make her free and independent, an excellent intention, of which she had very vague ideas as to the carrying out. Never having been in the capital before, she had that reverence for it as a field of infinite possibilities which people frequently have for the unknown, akin to the feeling of the emigrant who determines to sell up everything and "see what can be done" in America, or some other distant haven of great promise and small fulfilment. If anyone supposes she simply meant to throw herself straightway on the mercy and protection of Carl Corsar, anyone is mistaken. It is true, however, that she had the two following addresses as forlorn hopes graven on her memory:—"Audit College, Fenchester," and "Mermaid Club, Clarence Street, Strand."

Nothing remarkable happened to accentuate her journey, and the train arrived in due time at the terminus. Her port-

manteau having been consigned for the present to the cloak-room, Jenny proceeded to look around her, and sat upon a bench considering her next course. Where exactly to go to was the main problem. The plan existing sketchily in her mind was to get some lodgings, and then, by personal application, or by answering advertisements to find herself a place as shop girl, actress, heaven knows what—the stage attracted her most, again, I suppose, on the principle of veneration for the unknown—and live upon her means, with the view of confronting Carl some day triumphantly, with the statement:—"Look at me! I've made my own fortune!" This was all very well, but at the present moment Jenny, in the haven of her desires, or in that part of it represented by the G. E. R. Terminus, had not the shadow of an idea where to begin, or whom to apply to for advice, and listened perplexedly to those long echoing whistles which supply the place of sea-birds calling in London, and make a large station so cheerful.

Then Jenny looked up at the interwoven, smoky iron fret-work of girders far above her head. No inspiration there. And the interesting mural inscription did not seem productive. The various people who passed did not look sympathetic. They were travellers or porters occupied in their own affairs, men who had been to the cattle show, or whatever other instructive exhibition the venturesome provincial uses as an excuse to his parents or wife for a visit to the town; young university men, on their way "up" or "down," who usually gave her a critical furtive glance and then muttered to one another; the usual females in distress, others not in distress; one or two clergy, and a volunteer. But few of them looked as if they had time or inclination to advise a young girl how to make a fortune in London.

Finally, she concluded to leave the station and take a little walk. Of course she would go for a "little walk" by herself as readily in London as in the Fens. Therefore she emerged into Bishopsgate, and walked slowly along it. It was the hour of the day when the junior city stands about on the pavement, picking its teeth and conversing before going back to gaslit rooms in Mark Lane or Leadenhall Street to assist the great money-spiders. Nicely dressed "every day young men" formed the main part of the crowd, with an occasional elderly one. Foreigners appeared numerous. Not inquiring

tourist foreigners, but business-like, talkative, Stock Exchange foreigners, who often hailed from Aldgate and the East, or from Manchester and Hamburg, and originally and ancestrally from the land watered by the Jordan.

Of course there was the usual impenetrable jumble of traffic, but curiously enough no fog; it was a brilliant, sunlit day, and the tall imposing old buildings of Bishopsgate looked almost cheerful, and certainly formed a picture worth remembering as a first vision of London. And Jenny remembered it. She loitered along, forgetting, girl-like, all her projects and difficulties in the interesting study of windows and wares. After a few minutes of bewildered wonderment, when she had walked a little way towards Norton Folgate, not knowing or caring which way the street led, she saw a window and door bearing the inscription, "Hot joints from twelve to two, chops, steaks, coffee, &c., at any time." There was also an advertisement in the window of certain coloured minstrels, of the local theatres, and of Sanger's (like Astley's) Amphitheatre. It struck Jenny that eating dinner could not be a waste of time, and that she might accidentally find out something or other inside there, by reading a newspaper. Vague again, Jenny. However, in she went, thinking this time rightly, that nothing ought to succeed like "cheek," in London, and said—

"Will you get me some steak please, and some potatoes—and a cup of coffee?"

"Steak and kidney pudding, would you like?" said the waitress.

"Yes," said Jenny, as if the purpose of her life had been the acquisition of steak and kidney pudding, and as if she knew the combination well.

"Will you sit down here?"

And Jenny found herself at a table, in a wooden compartment, apparently of great age, for the wood was quite "gone" in places, and afforded copious repasts and a residence to the creature who is "your only true emperor for diets."

A moderately clean cloth, a cruet-stand, and a bread-basket were on the table. Jenny helped herself to bread, and thought, "If living in London is going to be like this, it isn't half bad." Then she looked round. It was after two by a yellow-faced high-suspended clock, and no other customer but herself was there. The newspapers hung idle, flabby and



wrinkled, over the wooden bench-backs which served as divisions between the compartments. It was rather dark inside these brown wire blinds. At the inner end of the rather long room was a staircase curling away behind old black panelling into the invisible. There was also the kitchen, where a couple of young women were washing up crockery and looking after the fire. The waitress was leaning against a table, resting, and thinking of nothing particular, after giving Jenny's order to the kitchen.

Jenny looked at her, and saw a distinctly pretty girl, with magnificent dark eyes, a fine complexion, and dry, "fuzzy" dead-black hair. Her dress was an old black one, well-fitting and shapely, but shiny at the seams, and she stood there in an attitude any painter's model would have required several hours practice and swearing at to assume. This girl lounged and loafed with a natural grace that made one think she ought to be on a divan somewhere, in gorgeous attire, smoking latakia. Jenny did not quite think all this. She only thought the girl rather interesting, and felt she would like to know her. When she brought the steak and kidney pudding, Jenny said—

"I want to ask you for some information, if you have nothing else just now to do."

"Yes?" said the girl. She never added the word "Miss" or "Mam" to her sentence. She evidently was not accustomed to regard the customers as her social superiors.

"Won't you sit down? They won't care in there I suppose, and I have no right to keep you standing. I speak to you because you're the first person I have seen in London I feel I *can* speak to. I never was in London before."

"I can see that," said the other girl, and the two dark beauties looked curiously at each other across the narrow table.

"I daresay; and I want to know of somewhere where I can get respectable lodgings that don't cost very much?"

"Excuse my asking—it makes some difference—what part of London do you want to live in? Where do you expect to make your living?"

"I don't know one part of London from another, and I haven't yet made up my mind how I'm going to make my living—like you, perhaps; you don't seem unhappy."

"My dear child! I beg your pardon, but I think you're a

good deal younger than me. What *can* your parents have been thinking about to let you stray off to town like this?"

"I haven't got any parents."

"Oh. I beg your pardon again. Have you really no people at all? You see, if I'm to help you, you must let me ask questions; I'm naturally curious."

"I have no people I can live with. I'm not afraid of anything, I don't mind working—at least I don't think so, and I want to live somewhere—well the way people who make their own living *do* live—so as to be able to find out things for myself. But I'm awfully puzzled what to do. London is such a great, noisy, tiring place."

The goodlooking waitress felt a good-natured interest in this curious lost child, and thought to herself, "I suppose she's genuine. If she *is* genuine, she'll have some luggage." Then she said aloud—

"We must talk about this a little more. Have you got any things? Because people who let lodgings like lodgers to have luggage."

"Yes. I've got some things in the cloak-room at Liverpool Street."

"That's all right. And have you any money?"

"I've got this—no more." Jenny showed her five-pound note and five sovereigns. The other's eyes flashed, and she said—

"Look here, my young friend, don't you go showing your cash to strangers like that again! It doesn't do in London."

"But I didn't think you a stranger. You look like a person I can trust, and if you tried to rob me, I believe I could throw you out of the window," added Jenny, laughing, as she disposed of the remains of her meal, and leaned back reflectively regarding the coffee.

The other girl was certainly of slighter build, and probably a little lighter than the fine-bred, strong-limbed young country girl, whose delicate pallor was more the result of irregular hours and meals than of weak physique, whose little monkey-like brown hands owed their sun tan to sculling on the Snorham river. The town-mouse looked at the country-mouse, and said—

"I believe you could, if you wanted. Look here, let's clear out of this place—I shall have nothing to do till six—and come out of doors. We can talk there better. I think

something can be done. Here, give me a quid, and I'll get change and pay for your dinner, and tell them I'm going out."

And the girl disappeared. When she reappeared she was dressed for going out—quite as tastefully dressed as herself, Jenny observed, though in older and cheaper materials. Putting Jenny's change into her hand, she sallied forth. When they were both fairly outside the eating-house, this curious girl said—

"Since it seems we two are going to take each other on trust, I, from my experience of people's faces (I see a good many, you know), you, because you don't know any better, suppose we introduce ourselves. My name is Sarah Levy, commonly known to my friends as Sadie."

"Mine is Jane Sandham, usually called Jenny."

"Very well, shake hands, Jenny Sandham, and let's be friends until we become enemies. I'm not prophesying; it's only a way of speaking. I saw you were not one of our people."

"Our people? What do you mean?"

"Haven't you guessed from looking at me?"

"Are you foreign? You don't talk as if you were."

"I'm a Jew. Have you any objection?"

"Goodness, no; why should I? I suppose Jews are very like other people?"

"They are often a jolly sight cleverer and better looking than other people; however I don't want to boast. You are very good-looking yourself, Jenny. I suppose you know that!"

"I have heard so," said Jenny, smiling rather shyly.

"Oh, have you! Did a woman ever tell you so before?"

"Oh—er—I really don't remember now."

"Don't tell stories. I don't want to know your secrets, you know. I was only chaffing. Look here, to return to business, if you don't mind the quarter of the town, I can find you a nice cheap lodging, I think, for a time, where I live. Come and look at the place. The outside isn't swellish, but the inside is comfortable."

"Would they like to take me in, though?"

"What, because you're a shik—Christian, I mean? Oh, I shall say you are a friend of mine, and a harmless sort of person. They won't care, they aren't Jews. Come and look.

If you like it, we can go for your luggage, and arrive like an ambassador in a hansom."

"Do ambassadors generally arrive in hansoms?"

"Invariably. Now don't be frightened because my short-cuts are a little dingy. You will be among my people directly, and you are safe enough there. Follow close."

And the little Israelite dived from stately, if dingy, Bishops-gate, into what was apparently a doorway. It led, however, into an extremely narrow, high passage, under and between tall houses, where it was necessary to walk in single file. Jenny, as we know, was a courageous girl, but never having been in a large and ancient town before, was naturally a little startled at Catherine Wheel Alley. However, she kept her feelings to herself. They passed through a sort of stable-yard, developing gradually into a small lane, full of gambolling black or fair-haired children, and then found themselves in a very narrow, very populous street, smelling strongly of fried fish. Hatless girls wandered about in twos and threes, as if they were quite at home; curious old men in peaked caps, with locks of hair hanging forward over their ears, stood smoking in the shop-doors, while others, in long coats, some with high boots, stood in groups talking eagerly in curious languages, among which Jenny did not distinguish Polish and German to be the principal. She had glimpses of inner and further recesses, and *culs-de-sac* between the houses, but had no immediate desire to penetrate them. The whole was something so absolutely new and strange to her experience, that she felt in a foreign country. She kept close alongside Miss Sadie Levy, who said—

"Do you know?—no! of course you don't know where you are. This is Petticoat Lane, where they have the market on Sunday mornings. We'll go there some day, it may amuse you."

And then they emerged from the dark, quiet "Ghetto" of Petticoat Lane, into a wide, paved, bustling thoroughfare, which, Jenny was informed, was High Street, Whitechapel. And after walking along it some little way, Jenny's wonderment at the queer diversified crowd and the sudden changes of scene she had gone through being extremely high, they took a tram, which took them after about a quarter of an hour to a small, dull, respectable-looking, deadly monotonous side street. They knocked at the side door, and waited. An



elderly spectacled woman answered it, speaking with a provincial accent :—

“ Well, Sarah Levy, what for you ? ”

“ I’ve brought Miss Sandham, a friend of mine, looking for apartments. She has left her things till she knew where to take them to, and has come to look at yours.”

To shorten rather a long story, it may be stated that Jenny and the pretty young daughter of the tribes became great friends, as two people, one of whom is the helper and the other the helped, are likely to become. It is quite probable that Jenny would have found some one else to befriend her, had she not found Sadie Levy. On the other hand, it is equally probable that she would not. At any rate she *did* find her and profited thereby, and made acquaintance with the curious, picturesque, bustling, dingy, Jew’s quarter of London, and learned to respect and admire that strange people. I do not say “ that ancient people ” because, as far as I know, they are about as old as a good many other average nations, and younger than several, in point of civilisation. It is true they had law, language, and literature when our own ancestors were ploughing the foam for plunder and prey, harrying by day, drinking and singing by night, practices with modifications which many of them carry on still.

To return to Jenny Sandham. Assisted by her friend, she found her way a little about London, learned the use of the omnibus, the “ underground,” the policeman, and the afternoon papers, and diligently sought a means of subsistence. She answered advertisements for assistants in the retail tobacco-trade, and found that she was insufficiently experienced, or certificated, or that the place was already filled. She found that dressmakers did not seem enthusiastic about a young person who had hardly ever threaded a needle in her life, and whose sole experience in dresses and hats related to the pace at which they can wear out. She applied to a theatrical agency which promised to find engagements for anybody, without reference to capacity, age, or previous inexperience.

The agency accepted a portion of her rapidly declining fortune, and did nothing further. The idea of a girl of eighteen bringing an action against an agency, a Firm, with several names in it printed on a zinc plate on the corner of a

passage, was simply preposterous. Besides, actions cannot be brought without money. Of course she could not be aware that one whisky-drinking, bar-frequenting, fourpenny-cigar-smoking being, with a waxed black moustache, was the only representative the Firm of Farquharson, Gordon, and Mainwaring ever had or ever will have, and that her poor sovereign went in short drinks for self and partners to this person the same day in which she surrendered it.

Jenny was brave, but there comes to the brave a stern hour, which only differs from despair as the brave ones differ from the cowards, the strong from the feeble. The despair of the weak is less suffering than the endurance of hopelessness by the strong. This hour came to Jenny when her ten pounds had gone, and her watch had followed them.

What her thoughts, struggles, intentions, hopes, temptations, agony were in that bad time she has never told. And it is not for me to guess, to imagine, to pry. Spiritually she was in the attitude of Dom Claude Frollo, hanging to his tower. Were you ever in such a position? Then you can answer the question, How does it feel? for yourself. But it was decreed that she should not fall. Salvation came. Not a very tempting or very choice form of salvation, but better than the three fates that face the destitute girl in London—the union, the street, and the river. For more than you or I can count these Three are the grim roads yet open. Jenny went with the courage of desperation, and presented herself to the manager of a smallish theatre in West Central London. He accepted her services for the chorus. She was to have nothing to say, little to do but stand in her proper place and exhibit her maiden charms to the stalled and pitted animals that paid to see the show.

This was the form her salvation took. But it paid her rent and restored her self-respect. If I have the honour of addressing a lady, I will ask, Would it restore or strengthen your self-respect to display your person nightly for twenty to twenty-five shillings a week to the public? You think it would not. But it did Jenny's. It is paradox, but it is true. Her worldly experience advanced by strange strides. From Jewry to the theatre, from West India Dock Road to the Strand, did a 'bus or train convey her daily, and off-time and Sundays she spent with Sadie Levy at home. She learned what charming manners, what true generosity, urbanity and

accommodating unselfishness pervade the atmosphere of a chorus dressing-room, how very acceptable beer, sandwiches and oranges, and "sweets" may occasionally become, and what very thin stratagems and mechanical fun are sufficient to divert a large portion of that critical and discerning body, the British public. In fact, Jenny was guilty, after a month or two of the theatre had taken away her shyness, of inventing the expression, "the Brutish public."

Sadie, in Jenny's absence, of course took opportunities to gratify her natural girl's curiosity as to who Jenny was, why she was in London, and whether there was, somehow, as her instincts suggested, a He in the case. Jenny had told her very little—merely that she had no "people"—at any rate none who appreciated her, or with whom she sympathised, but not where she came from, or any direct information. "What I have been doesn't matter," she said. "What does matter is what I am and what I'm going to be. And even that doesn't matter much." So Sadie ransacked Jenny's room, carefully, slowly, and neatly, more neatly than the politest officer of the Douane, for she did not wish to hurt Jenny's feelings by leaving signs of her conduct. The little Jewess meant no harm. She liked Jenny very much, but she was "consumedly" curious. She did not mean to make any particular use of what she might find out. She only wanted to *find* it out.

And she found nothing, except Carl's photograph—cabinet, wrapped in silver paper. "And a very nice-looking young man you are," remarked Sadie Levy as she inspected Carl's face, to which the "Vander Weyde Light" had done full justice. "I can quite understand a girl liking you. And I wonder who you are, where you are, and why you don't turn up sometimes. I think you will turn up later on. Trumps always turn up last. And when you were dealt you belonged to a trump suit, I think. Now you can go back. You won't tell, like a good fellow." Of course after this Sadie took a fresh interest in her young friend, and asked mysterious, circuitous leading questions, which Jenny put down to her knowledge of the world and general sharpness, and feared it would be useless to try to take her in in any way.

When Jennie came home from rehearsal that afternoon, she went to the eating-house in Bishopsgate, to partake of some of the food which Sadie would hand, though, of course,



could not eat. For, frivolous and girl of the world as she was inclined to be, though she might scoff at the synagogue, and call it a stupid old place, she drew the line at eating Christian steak and kidney. She looked at Jenny with a sort of anxious parental expression, gave her some lunch, and a mug of porter (Jenny liked draught porter now), and suggested afterwards going out for a walk and talk.

"All right," said Jenny. "I've got to work hard the next few days. We've got a new piece coming on, and I have two lines to speak. Think of that! Old Jemmy says ('Old Jemmy' was the reverential term the chorus of the Deanery Theatre used for their originally good-natured, now much worried and stormy manager, Mr. James Symes) — Old Jemmy says I ought to take lessons in step-dancing, that it would advertise my anatomy a little. What do you think?"

"I think you're becoming an awful cockney, Jenny. Six or eight weeks ago you would as soon have talked Dutch as said 'What do *you* think.' I am afraid your theatre life is making you unfit for my society. What is your new piece? Can you get me a first-night order?"

"Don't know. I'll try. Miss Alma Trevor said she'd get me one, the other day, because I dressed her well. Most likely she'll forget all about it."

"I do admire Miss Trevor so! Don't you?"

"She isn't a bad old girl, when you do all she wants you to do. The new piece is by some Frenchman, of course adapted and all that. Time, present; place, London, I suppose, or Constantinople, or somewhere. It's a burlesque."

"How very improper! I hope you'll get that order out of Miss Alma Trevor. She's in it, of course."

"Of course she is. She and Kate Gascoigne divide all the best parts between them. Jemmy and Gascoigne had a row to start with, over the screw; Jemmy wouldn't give in till Gascoigne threatened to chuck up the whole bag of tricks (her words, my dear, not mine) and go to the Frivolity. Trevor was awfully pleased at something or other, because Jemmy got slanged, or because Gascoigne got less lines than she wanted, I suppose, and got the author to put in two lines for me, in a fit of good nature. She likes me. So do lots of the girls, except one or two who wanted parts and can't have them."

To hear this slang, this green-room habit of speaking of women by their surnames, from Jenny's mouth, was like



hearing a child or a parrot swear. She had just caught it up, and thought it amusing to exaggerate it slightly, in order to impose on Sadie, who replied—

“This is perfectly awful, Jenny! You’re hardly eighteen, and what in the world will you be like at twenty-five?”

“I’m getting what the books call ‘hardened,’ I suppose. At twenty-five I may aspire to do the leading skipping-rope business at the Frivolity, perhaps. Seems at present like a newspaper boy wanting to be editor of the *Times*, doesn’t it?”

“I suppose you’ll soon be too proud to live with us any longer.”

“I’m not proud. I don’t know what right you have to say things like that.”

“Bless you, I was only chaffing. Don’t be always suspecting people of nasty insinuations. How do you like the city? Let’s go and do a tour of all the exhibitions that cost nothing. We can see the outside of the Bank, and St. Paul’s, and the Tower. You’ve never been up to the Tower.”

“What do all these men do here in the City? I hardly ever see any women.”

“Do? Make money, or try to. What should they do?”

“But they are always standing about talking. They don’t seem to *do* anything. You and I work for our money. They don’t seem to work, and I suppose they get lots more money than we do?”

“They are making money when they are standing about talking. At least the men on ‘Change are. There is no law of nature which says the people who do the most work are to get the most profit. Rather the other way.”

And these two kept up this sage prattle on things in general for some time, wandering about the city scanning the shop-windows, criticising the passers by, discussing the marvellous cheapness of certain twelve-buttoned gloves, arguing on the one topic on which girls can be serious for a long time together—dress, comparing notes on corsets, boots, kiltings, box-pleats, violet-powder, deciding whether Jerseys should button or lace up the back, etc., etc., eating nuts like irreverent little monkeys under the shadow of “Poules,” and finally, going back to Bishopsgate to tea, after which, Sadie to her home, the eating-house closing at six or half-past, and Jenny to her duties at the Deanery Theatre. “Don’t forget my first-night order!” were Sadie’s parting words.

Jenny was much elated at the prospect of gradual promotion in her profession, and saw fortune and large bouquets from the Royal box somewhere in the mists of aerial perspective. The manager thought there was something in her, and said so to Miss Alma Trevor, who agreed with him; also to Miss Kate Gascoigne, who differed from him. Miss Gascoigne was of the same dark style of beauty as Jenny, or "went in" for that style at present, and resented the inevitable comparisons which would be made between herself and this girl half her age. Miss Trevor had pale orange tresses, black eyebrows and brown eyes, and considered Jenny an appropriate foil to herself, and further remarked to Mr. Symes, "She's a dam useful little thing is Morton, and good-natured. Got better manners than most of your chorus, Jemmy. Doesn't strew the floor with H's, don't you know. If I go away from here I shall take her with me." I forgot to mention that "Jemmy" had "put up" the new acquisition to the idea of having a professional name. "Might be useful you know, when some of your friends read the bills accidentally. Daresay you wouldn't care to have your real name there."

"Thank you," said Jenny. "What shall I be called?"

"Oh, I don't care. Whatever you like. Let's see." And he looked over some old bills. "Miss Theo Morton has gone to America, and has an Italian name now. Suppose you were to become Miss Theo Morton? Theo is a nice Frenchified, fetching sort of name—easy one, too." And "Theo Morton" she became, and soon got to remember who was meant when people shouted, "Morton! Hang it, where's Morton?"

And the time approached for the first night of the new burlesque. Mr. Symes perspired, smoked more than ever, took whisky and soda, dashed about, swore, took irregular meals and little sleep. Jenny got nervous, and repeated her two lines to herself in omnibuses, at her meals, before her looking-glass, and in her dreams, with every variety of expression.

She got the order for Sadie, who radiantly borrowed a scarlet and swansdown cloak from some friend of her own persuasion who "waited on ladies at their own houses, either in town or country, at any hour," in order to acquire such articles.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### JENNY RETROSPECTIVE STILL.

THE modern successor of the alchemist and astrologer despises the pompous mystery and solemn triviality of his mediæval prototypes. The investigator of nature of the Middle Age, such as the Dutch painters delighted in representing, sits in a furred doctor's gown in a Gothic chamber decorated with stuffed and suspended alligators, pickled monstrosities whose pallid faces leer through the glass sides of their phials, heavy perfumes, brass-bound books of magic, mural inscriptions and floor designs in the language of mystic nonsense—

“Où les monstres tracés autour du zodiaque  
Portant écrit au front leur nom en syriaque  
Dansent entre eux des boléros!”

where the confusion of pentacle, microcosm, and macrocosm, with stars and common bones, typifies the strange mixture of the known, the knowable, the unknowable, and the hopelessly silly which constituted the learning of Averroës or Faustus, as they sat waiting for gold, or for the devil attired as a travelling scholar. They revelled in darkening the mysteries which Newton and Darwin and those with them have helped to unveil for ever. But these last sought no gold. They sought knowledge. When wisdom cried aloud in her loneliness they preferred her above rubies, philosophers' stones, longevity mixtures, and all the despairs of Chrusomania and rewards of charlatanism.

Carl Corsar was surely no exponent of a Faust-legend as he sat in a flannel boating suit one night peering through the microscope, which was such a potent weapon in the hands of investigators of his school. Some cavendish slowly burning in the slender wooden pipe was the only spirit-controller and altar of fumigation under the angular roof of his attic. The

romance of it was apparently wanting—that wonderful Rembrandtesque light and darkness of magic, half-known nature and half-ignored supernature which has given us the legends wonderfully and eternally shaped forth from the crude folklore by Marlowe and Goethe. Here was no passionate Claude Frolo in his tower with “Ananké” burning in his brain, no cunning Subtle preying on human folly. Here was a young man sitting at a table strewn with papers, dissecting instruments, staining fluids, pens and matches, with the pale green light of the shaded lamp on his tired, refined face as it leaned scowlingly over the brass tube of lenses constructed by one Zeiss of Jena. Before him the red-curtained window, a row of narrow slits with massive grey stone partitions; behind him the fireplace, where the eternal kettle of college rooms was cooling; and above that, in half darkness, the black and white portrait of Charles Darwin. And yet into this den of the real and matter-of-fact Mephistopheles had penetrated in his subtle modern way, and preached—

“Grau, theurer Freund, ist aller Theorie  
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum!”

There was no Gretchen in a mirror, but there was a Jenny in a photograph. This, of course, was a period some time before the sunbeam shone on May Raynham’s fair head, as she sat in his window one summer day and made him forget that there were other women in the world, less fair, less refined, less gentle, less full of graceful refinement, but not one whit less capable of love. And Jenny seemed lost now, leaving only remorseful, passionate memories behind for him.

Carl had dismissed his last pupil, drank his last cup of coffee, and was preparing for his morning’s lecture, which, as usual, he had postponed to the last moment. When his notes were fully prepared, and a satisfactory row of proofs of his assertions therein (things despised by the mediæval investigator) had been disposed in a box, on glass slides, he leaned back in his chair, stretched, stood up, and walked slowly about the room. Then he threw some coals on to the fire, and excited them to burn by a combustible locally termed a “devil,” well known to University men, made of resin and firewood, and supplied at an exorbitant price by the college grocer. Then he played a polka on the piano. Then he took Juliet out of her den and gave her her supper, and nursed



her, and spake kindly to her. Then he drew the red curtains back and looked out through the open window. The battlements outside prevented his seeing anything but the eternal stars, and, as Carl remarked, "The infernal cats!" To please Juliet he made threatening sibilant noises, proved by experience to be extremely annoying and terrifying to cats. Then he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, refilled and lit it, and sprawled on his rickety old cretonne sofa, puffing out smoke and seeing visions in the clouds. "Any sensible man, Juliet," he observed, "would go to bed, now that his work was done. I don't go to bed. I am afraid the conclusion follows—you mustn't eat boot-buttons, dear, they're not at all nice)—that I am not a sensible man. Come in!"

And, following his vigorous kick on the door (frequent among Audit men) Sandy entered, in a *deshabillé* of white flannel trousers, a corps-student's black-velvet jacket, and no hat.

"How can you let that beastly white rat run over you like that? How are you getting on?"

"Oh! I'm all right. How's your work?"

"I didn't come here at this time of night to talk shop. What a beastly state your rooms are in! Come over to mine. I've got a decent fire, and some food and liquor. You seem to have let yours out, and got the place into a perfect den of desolation."

"I suppose I have. I didn't notice till you said so. What have you got to eat?"

"Pickled salmon, veal pie, Rüdesheimer wine and Pilsener beer."

"Nice mess to put into one's inside at one in the morning! All right—I'll come. Go home, Juliet, and go to sleep. You can't come, he doesn't like you. It's his loss, not your's, but he doesn't—I say, Sandy, do you mind my bringing over my letters with me? I haven't had any time to *read* them yet. Had six pups to-day since five o'clock."

"Of course bring them with you."

Sandy's habitation over the Bishop's Gateway was certainly more inviting to look at than Carl's attic den behind the battlements. Carl stood in front of the blazing fire with his legs apart, and wagged his pipe slowly up and down between his teeth.

"Yes," he said, "this is better just now than my quarters."

And I haven't even got a view. Why those idiotic old founders made battlements to a place that never was meant to be defended, especially on the inside, I don't know. They're not pretty, and they're no earthly use. I once tried lying out there one warm evening. My face was nearly black when I came in."

"Apoplexy?"

"No. Soot." And Carl tore open his letters, one by one. At last he observed with much suddenness, "What the—who the—? I say, look here!"

Sandy looked here. The following is what he read:—Post-mark, London, E. No address. No date. "If you ever go to the Deanery Theatre, look out for Miss Theo Morton."

Carl did not know the hand, but he had instinctive unreasoning convictions which he did not immediately divulge as to the writer.

"Some *coryphée* has fallen in love with your distant view in the stalls. Do you go to the Deanery much?"

"Don't remember ever going. Always heard it was a rotten sort of show."

"Perhaps she's seen your photo at the Stereoscopic Company among other public characters, and asked who it was."

"My photo isn't at the Stereoscopic Company just yet."

"Let's see, here's to-day's paper. 'Royal Deanery Theatre. This and every following evening till further notice, the new spectacular Burlesque, "The Granddaughter of the Regiment," adapted from the French of M.M. Crin-crin and Pastiche by J. Milton Perkins. Mesdames Alma Trevor, Kate Gascoigne—um—um. Messrs. Jones, Browne, and Robinson—um—um, supported by the powerful Deanery Company. Seats may be booked in advance. No fees. James Symes, Acting Manager.' My friend, this sheds little light on the subject. She isn't important enough to have her name in the bill. She is the 'powerful Deanery Company,' I suppose."

After a pause Carl said, "Sandy, to-morrow's Saturday. What do you say to going to town?"

"Can you get rid of your pups in time for the theatres?"

"Confound my pups. Who said anything about the theatres? However, now you mention it, we might investigate this Burlesque."

"I'll come. Nothing like experiment. Grasp the moment while you've got it. We may find something, of course, and it can't do us any harm."

"We may 'strike ile.' If we don't like it we can go away, scoop about, and do a general bender. I haven't been in town for an awful time."

After this these representatives of natural and moral philosophy sat down with the pickled salmon, the veal pie, and the Rhine wine and Pilsener beer between them, and a short lapse of conversation took place. Then Sandy, after a long draught of the icy beer, pale amber in colour, which Bohemia furnishes to the world, said,

"What are you thinking about, Carl? You've got a very suggestive expression."

"I was wondering why they can't oftener invent some new kind of woman. They are all so much alike."

"What is it you want?"

"She, now," continued Carl, glancing at a sketch on Sandy's walls of the elder Faustina,—“she was a little different—not much—from what many living women would be with her opportunities. Put some beauty of the photographer's windows in her position. Give her a good stoical husband, like Marcus Aurelius, who believes in her simplicity and fidelity to his dying day, and apotheosizes her by legacy. Give her an age when it is the fashion to do what you generally please, and kill people you happen to dislike out of revenge, or people you happen to like for fun, both with impunity; when the rights of woman are to enjoy herself in the way that pleases the female superior ape best—and a funny way it often is. Given all this, don't you suppose we could turn out some two dozen incomparable Faustinas from the people that exhibit themselves at fancy fairs for charitable purposes, and sell kittens to unhappy men?"

"Perhaps it will be the fashion to have gladiatorial shows some day, on purpose for the '*belles dames sans mercy*.'"

"By Jove! We know some girls who would enjoy it, eh?"

"Everyone would go, if it were the thing, just as they go now to murder-trials, to church, to Hurlingham, to assaults-of-arms or bull-fights, if they are in a country where such things happen."

"When I was in Deutschland, and an 'Activ' of the 'Vandalen,' there were some girls—English girls—who used to

watch the students' duels from concealed coigns of vantage. They never tired of it."

"The appetite of bloodshed and the sight of strong men contending has always been an insuperable delight and desire to some women."

"And the tendency of all this discourse? If it has a tendency."

"I should like to educate into perfection some supremely bad woman. I mean, of course, into perfection of badness. She must have certain qualities as a groundwork—courage, for example, to do as she pleases, to lead fashion, not to follow it; one who is not induced to sin by some flattering, flimsy casuist of a man, but goes in of her own accord because she knows it is worth doing, and wants it as good as they make it. When I had done with her, she should fear neither man, god, nor devil."

"It is a new idea to suppose bad women are rare."

"Yes. But the present race of average bad women are only bad so far as men make them so, and so far as they can please men by being so. My woman would do it to please herself, and not care what the feelings of the men were on the subject."

"Deuced unpleasant person to be at large."

"Of course. She would be a celebrity, intellectual enough to know that freedom is the highest happiness, brutal enough to abuse her freedom to the *n*<sup>th</sup>. She would select the good and respectable men and make them her slaves, only to send them empty away when they had surrendered their principles. She would have supreme, unfettered taste in her dress, which would be a scandal and a model to the ruck of respectability who stared after her and bought her photos. She would try, in fact, out of mere caprice, how many coaches and six she drove through the unwritten statutes of social decorum, and yet be feared, hated, worshipped, and imitated. She would make athletes fight for her amusement in deadly earnest, instead of the comparatively tame excitement of football and athletics, which women now enjoy so much to look at. It would be an interesting experiment."

"A sort of hash, in fact, of Cleopatra, Faustine, Ashtaroth, and an idealised—Jenny Sandham. Ha! *Touché*, I think?"

"Give me a light, will you?"

"Fill up the flowing beakers. We drink, Carl, to Jenny,



and may she plunge you into no further insanity than this present rhetorical ecstasy. Vivat! Floreat!"

The next evening, after a comfortable little dinner *en Bohême*—I particularise not, with the aim of keeping the resorts of the *illuminati* undesecrated by the curiosity of those in external obfuscation—Carl and Sandy sat, digesting serenely, in the stalls of the pretty little house which has been called the Deanery Theatre. The Burlesque was like many burlesques, composed of a little fun, much stupidity, selections from the music-hall songs, and gorgeous scenery and costume. Through the first act their attention languished, and Sandy was about to say, "I say, this isn't good enough. Let's go somewhere else," when Carl's expression suddenly became that of a pointer who sees a partridge, and he said in a hasty whisper, "By Jove! Look there!" Jenny, otherwise Miss Theo Morton, entered in the costume worn (on the stage) by the soldiers of the first French Republic, and gave a message in two lines, containing three puns, to a fiery-faced general.

"Awfully becoming, though a nuisance in a campaign, those long many-buttoned gaiters are!" remarked Sandy with a calm smile.

"Good Lord! *How* does she get here?"

"Goodness knows. But she *is* here, my friend, and has seen us, and so you are in for it." The comfortable and elegant peacock-blue plush of the Deanery stalls became as thorns for Carl during the remaining two acts, in which Jenny appeared a good deal, but was mute.

At the end of the performance Carl and Sandy went to the stage-door and waited. "Don't send your card in," said the latter; "you don't want all the loafers here to know your exalted personality. She has seen us, and is bound to come out soon. Donnerwetter! There's another pretty girl; wonder who she's waiting for?"

This last remark applied to Miss Sadie Levy, who had left her stall behind those of our friends to wait for the same prey at the stage-door. Several miscellaneous human beings were outside that stage-door. There was an old woman waiting for her daughter. There were two or three *Junior Imberbes* waiting for other people's daughters, and there was a brougham waiting for Miss Kate Gascoigne. There was

an orange-woman and an *Echo* boy, who combined to fill the narrow side street with hideous sounds. There was a pick-pocket watching for an opportunity, and a little way off a policeman, also watching for an opportunity.

One or two actors came out, and went straight into a tavern opposite the stage-door. Two or three of the chorus came, causing commotion and emotion among the *Junior Imberbes*.

Then came Jenny, in a black hat and an ulster. Sadie received her rapturously, and expressed gratitude and delight for her evening's amusement. People like Sadie enjoy a burlesque thoroughly. But they enjoy a good strong drama, where they can cry, much more than a spectacle where they sometimes happen to laugh in the right place. Carl and Sandy stood motionless, and let Jenny discover them.

"Ah!" she said on seeing Carl. I almost think she blushed, but the gas lamp over the stage door was deep crimson glass. Then she added: "I couldn't help doing something to let you know what a swell I've become. I'm going to be a celebrity some day."

Sandy glanced at Carl expressively. "Come into the street," said the latter. "We can't talk well here."

Jenny introduced her bewildered but self-possessed friend, of whom Sandy instantly took charge, and a two and two procession formed itself in the street. After a little conversation the little regiment got "clubbed" again, and it was suggested by Sandy that two hansoms should be obtained, with a view to refreshments before the stern hand of the law made further refreshment impossible. After a little demur from Sadie about the hour, peremptorily overruled by the impulsive Jenny, the expedition in hansoms was organised, Carl and Jenny in one, Sandy and the charming little Jewess in the other. They drove to the place where the two male elements in the group had dined, and soon a jovial little group was sitting round a table in an upper room, discussing anchovy toast and lager beer. In the full, strong light, there, when Carl had taken off his hat and overcoat, Sadie recognised, to her great internal satisfaction and excitement, the Van der Weyde photograph. "I always knew he would turn up at last," she thought, "and I believe he's a trump."

Later on, the two girls were sent home to Judaea, or that portion of it existing east of Aldgate Pump, in a prepaid hansom.

"He is an awfully jolly fellow," remarked Sadie, "and awfully handsome. But I think I like the other best, though he isn't a beauty."

"You'd better," replied Jenny shortly.

Carl and Sandy walked about in the cool night air and soothing solitude of the Strand, Pall Mall, and Haymarket, the latter continually humming a *sotto voce* song.

"Well," said Carl, "What do you think?"

" 'Heureux qui mettra sa cocarde,  
Au bonnet de Mimi Pinson.' "

That's all I think just at present. Let's go and have a couple of cocktails at the Cri."

So was rivetted the second link that bound Carl to the old romance of the misty sunlit fields of the fen-land, begun that far off summer evening at the old Ship inn.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CARL SURRENDERS.

WHEN Carl came up to town by the night train from Watermouth he thought over all the story which it has taken three chapters to tell only a fragment of. And he thought with sorrow and remorse that he had allowed the memory of the girl Jenny, who loved him, whom he had loved, who worked and suffered to gain an honest living in order to shine in his eyes, almost to pass away from him in the bewildering paradise whose golden open gates faint hope had shown him only to shut them in his face for ever. He had almost been acting out the cynical advice of his father: "If you have love affairs take care that the other party is more in love than you are." Sure in the possession of this wild, impulsive, half-educated, wholly-honest girl, he had felt his own passion for her drifting away to where

"Go the old loves that wither,"

and

"Wild leaves that winds have taken."

He preached often the doctrine of gathering fresh roses, throwing them away when faded, and replacing with new ones; he had listened and laughed at the light-hearted scorn of Sandy for any kind of feeling for women, except that easy, scornful toleration for a time, and avoidance when satiety set in, which distinguished the gay Mousquetaire school of gallantry to which he belonged, but he was ashamed in his own heart at having nearly been a personal exponent of the theory. "Curse it!" he thought, in that third-class smoking compartment, "I'm glad May wouldn't have me—I deserve it."

When he got to London it was too late to go anywhere but to bed, where he slept scarcely at all, and half heard the last waltz they had danced while he opened that telegram in the moonlight.



In the morning he started from the obscure hotel in the Euston Road where he had—well—lain awake, and started to see Jenny. She no longer lived east of Aldgate Pump now, but shared a lodging with another girl of the Deanery, over a gas-fitter's shop in Camberwell, accessible from central London by 'bus. The other girl was Miss Minnie James. Why she had taken a particular fancy to the name of James it is difficult to say, as her father, the gas-fitter, was called Arnold—quite as "nice" a name, one would think, for professional purposes. However, Miss Minnie James she was. Carl had scarcely ever seen this young woman ; at any rate, if he had he "noted her not."

He took an omnibus and spent a long weary three-quarters of an hour or so in reaching his destination. Then he rang at the bell at the house of one Arnold, a gas-fitter, in a very quiet, respectable-looking street, where tall, brown houses stood back from the causeway behind railed-in pieces of garden. This street is very productive in surgeons and physicians, to say nothing of patent galvanic people and mineral bath people. In fact there is quite a procession of crimson lamps by night and brass gate-plates by day. This is the kind of neighbourhood where rents are low. This is where you will go in response to an advertisement of "Bed-room, gent's, part use of sitting, tram and 'bus." That is if you do not go to Brixton, Clapham, Barnsbury, Dalston, or Camden Town, where you will find newer, smaller, uglier houses, lacking the dignity and deep colouring to be found in Camberwell.

All sorts of curious people lodge here, but more particularly an immense number of girls who are employed in bars, theatres, and shops. From central London the omnibuses bring them at night in swarms, gathering as they go, destinations, Camberwell and Kennington. Sometimes a dark, little street off the Walworth Road, dingy, not old, merely superannuated, like Versailles. Sometimes a very, very new street, with much iron railing and very new looking venetian blinds, which indicate furniture inside covered with American cloth, and green and pink vases with lustres appended on the mantelpiece, and a photographic group in a red plush frame on a sideboard, of the master, mistress, and infant of the house. These streets are on the very edge of London, are usually called Roads, are never finished, and always have a

field in the neighbourhood where a new church is building, with a placard in front of it to the effect that funds are urgently needed to finish it. Churches seem to have a sort of *carte blanche* to spring uninvited into existence, live on "tick," and finally become debt-laden, wayside beggars, as here.

It was not quite so far on the outskirts that the gasfitter's house stood, but in an old street of tall, brown houses with front gardens and frequent brass plates and crimson lamps as aforesaid. Mr. Arnold himself came to the door in response to Carl's ring. An old man with a grey beard, a nearly bald head (of course with a hat on—gasfitters, like gentlemen at clubs, always have a hat on indoors), a long, black apron, two mild, pathetic, pale-blue eyes, and an accent which was the result of thirty years of London on a basis of Yorkshire.

"Professor Corsar, come in, sir. I hope you have your health, sir." These people always called him Professor—they thought it correct and respectful.

"Yes, thanks. How are you?"

"Well, sir, well as one can hope at sixty-five. I've a great many things to be thankful for, no doubt."

"Have you? Lucky man. How's Miss Morton?"

"She is nicely, I think; nicely, thank you, sir, and will be glad to hear you've returned."

"I thought—I understood she wasn't well?"

"She has had a bit of a cold, and perhaps been a little bilious the last day or two, it is true, now I think of it, but nothing to hurt. I take it it's those nasty, draughty wings at the theatre, you know. You mightn't believe it, sir, but when I was employed, as I was, sir, some ten or so years ago, to help arranging the footlights and floats, and one little thing and another, at the Deanery Theatre, which you know, sir, was rebuilt in 1869, I caught such rheumatism as I never had in all my life. But there, I suppose the people there, carpenters and that, gets used to it."

"Yes. Can I see Miss Morton?"

"Oh, well, yes, sir; you would catch her now at the theatre. She and my own girl went off by the 'bus just before you come. I should think you would have passed them now about ten minutes ago."

Carl suppressed with some difficulty the natural profanity

which strong irritation prompted, and said, "Then I suppose she is quite well really?"

"Well, you may say so now, I think. Nothing the matter there sir, no, nothing to signify. There's my son Dick, now, was a bit anxious about her—more than she deserved, if I may say so to you, sir; but then a young man do think more of a young woman's headache than an old man's heartache, they say."

"What business was it of his?"

"There, sir!" said the plaintive but long-winded old gas-fitter, "those are the very words I used to him. I said, Dick, what is the young lady to you? I have given you an education above your station, I have saved to bring you up like something better than you are; but that was not for you to be here at thirty years old doing nothing, spending money on fine clothes, and lying in bed half the morning—but there, I suppose it's our fault. The fact is his mother was always too kind to the boy, and gave him too good an opinion of himself. I said to him that he had no right to think about a young lady of the theatre, who might be a Keeley or Siddons some day perhaps, and as good as engaged to Professor Corsar; and, says he, (I'm sorry to say it, sir, but says he) 'D—— Professor Corsar!'"

"Did he, indeed?"

"He did so, sir. I was regular angry with him. I said what right had he to speak so of a gentleman? And he said, 'D—— him, and his Sandy Maxwell too!' Oh, Mr. Maxwell was down here the other day, and Miss Levy. Ah, she gave Dick a proper setting down, she did!"

"Maxwell was here, was he?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'm off. Thanks for your information, Mr. Arnold."

And Carl strode away, too angry, too much in a hurry to do anything but walk. He must have exercise of some kind to get over the storm and confusion this conversation had provoked in him. "Now, there'll have to be a row about this," he reflected. "I wonder what the deuce Sandy was after down here? Mr. Dick Arnold doesn't matter so much, but I have a notion that Sandy's conduct in any situation where pretty girls are concerned is not quite all that might

be desired. No, hang it! He's my friend and I'll trust him. Here, hansom!" One of the rare hansoms of this neighbourhood appeared.

"Go to the Deanery Theatre, and drive like sin."

"Right, sir."

It is very soothing when in a stormy temper to be conveyed rapidly in a hansom for some distance. The satisfaction of seeing the foot passengers flying right and left is almost worth the half-a-crown or more, probably three shillings, which will be demanded. There are states of mind in which we yearn to hail the nearest Juggernaut car, if we can find the stand, harness six fire-brigade horses to it, mount on the top, and proceed very rapidly down—say Cheapside—at noon, and past the Mansion House, yelling pæans of vengeful joy and dancing on the roof with a revolver in each hand. A very competent Juggernaut can be got out of a common hansom if you put a quart of "four ile" into the driver and give him *carte blanche* as to fines. Try, and you will probably get an interesting exposition as to "who's which" at Bow Street afterwards.

Something of this sort Carl felt. When he arrived at the theatre, where the stage doorkeeper knew him well by sight, he was informed that there was a "call" at eleven and that no one, by direction of Mr. Symes, could possibly be seen. The rehearsal would probably be over about three in the afternoon. Carl departed to occupy himself as best he could, leaving a message to Miss Theo Morton, to the effect that if she wanted to see him she could take a cab and come to the Bavarian Café, in the Strand, a place which both Carl and "professional" people "used," as publicans put it, a good deal. Then, just to occupy the time, he went for a walk to Trafalgar Square, and into St. James's Park, and up Constitution Hill to Hyde Park Corner, where it occurred to him to call on a man he happened to know at St. George's Hospital, who had recently passed a very good examination after two terms of Carl's coaching. This man was an enthusiastic and constant frequenter of two particular kinds of entertainment—first nights at theatres, and certain peculiar and difficult, though frequent, operations in another sort of theatre. He was at the latter amusement just then, and insisted on Carl's waiting to see it.



This Carl did, and looked on with rather languid interest, turning over in his mind continually the questions: What did Jenny mean by giving him the impression that she was at death's door and wanted him to receive her final deposition? How did she get his address? If from Sandy, why did the latter give it her—he, who knew so well the town-gallant's first commandment, never give a woman a man's address if that man is your friend, more especially if she asks for it? What was Sandy doing down there at all anyhow? Why on earth were girls ever made? and when made, why need they rush to London and go on the stage? What made him go on that infernal boating tour to Snorham, and that still more unfortunate and more recent journey to Watermouth? And, finally, what he wanted to know was, how was all this going to end? And then he remembered that after all Jenny loved him, and he her, and that she was only a girl, and girls were not made of the same stuff as men. Still she must be spoken to seriously.

As they left and strolled up Piccadilly, his surgical friend supposed Carl was, of course, going to the first night of *Alraschid*.

"What's that?"

"Fancy you not knowing! It's a forthcoming burlesque at the Deanery."

"Oh, is it? When does it come off?"

"To-morrow night."

"I dare say I shall be there."

"H'm! I dare say you will." And the surgical friend grinned, and suggested lunch in the immediate future. They walked up Piccadilly, and lunched at the Café Monico.

"And now," said Carl, "I'm afraid I must say good-bye; I've got an engagement."

"Oh, all right. Ta-ta."

Carl walked to the Strand, lingered about, looked at shops and people, and finally dived into the Bavarian Café, and sat down before a tall glass of Bavarian beer, and waited. The lunch consumers gradually disappeared, lingering at the bar in the ante-room for a final drink or cigar, and he was soon nearly alone. He finished his beer slowly and waited. When he had got halfway through the next glass and a cigar, a hansom stopped outside, and emitted two young ladies, dressed

extremely well and in the height of fashion, with that mysterious *cachet* about them which is impossible to locate or define, which proclaims to the practised eye the young lady whose profession is the stage. They carry small plush bags containing a purse, a pocket-handkerchief, and a small powder-puff, also in the one case a paper of pins, and in the other a rather dingy roll of "lines" and "cues" resembling a copy-book.

One was Jenny, otherwise Miss Theo Morton, of the Deanery Theatre, very different now from the Jenny Sandham, of the "Ship Inn," Snorham, Carl had first seen some two or three years ago. This was a tall and graceful young woman, with an expression of slightly exaggerated unconsciousness that all the men present turned to look at her, while the barmaid made notes of her costume—a highly becoming summer print, stiff from the hands of a skilled laundress. This was a young lady who talked learnedly about matters theatrical, called her manager old Jimmy, addressed female friends by their surnames, read the *Referee* on Sunday mornings, and knew all the 'bus routes and fares in the four-mile radius. She had not forgotten the fiery sunsets veiled in fenland fog, or the man with whom she had spent so many sweet minutes in gazing on the same. Her friend was fair. Very imposing they both looked as they "jetted" up to Carl's table, under the eyes of a worthy family from the country, who had got into this place by some accident, and were regaling on beef-steaks and bottled ale in a place the strong points of which were "Wiener Schnitzel" and "Aecht Bairisch."

"Suppose she's brought the other girl as a shield against the impending row," thought Carl carelessly.

Then Jenny shook hands and said,

"My friend, Miss Minnie James—Mr. Carl Corsar, Professor by rights, only it sounds so like a person who prestidigi—bother! conjures I mean."

Carl bowed and looked at Miss Minnie James. What was it that caused a sort of tremor to pass through him, as if he had touched the handles of an induction coil? It seemed to him that there was a strange, unaccountable suggestion and similitude, in this tall fair young burlesque actress who was clad as the lilies and poppies of the field, while her father wore a black apron with a hammer-containing pocket to it,

and fitted gas in Camberwell, to—May Raynham. There was the likeness. It was not strong, but it suggested itself at once, though Miss Minnie James had an expression quite her own. An expression which said plainly, "I enjoy, I take, I help myself and no one else; I am admired, and take it as a due. What you can gather, I can scatter. All you can save I can waste, and turn elsewhere for more. I have large pathetic eyes, and find them very useful. When you think they hunger for sympathy they really mean that I hunger for nice things to eat, and dresses, and fans, and long gloves, and wine that fizzes and pops—preferably at your expense, though I think you a fool for spending the money. And I think right as a rule. I like a good part, where plenty of people can see plenty of me. I'm worth seeing, and know it."

Not a very good companion for Jenny, surely? "Yet it is better," Carl thought, "for her to live with this family than by herself, in spite of Mr. Dick Arnold, educated up to the point of despising his people and his work, I suppose, and Miss Minnie James with her—oh, where *did* she get that face, and what induced Jenny to bring her here?"

Miss James was taller than May, and possessed what Mr. Symes (popularly old Jimmy), called a good front-row figure. One of the long, slim, square-shouldered figures which came into fashion a few years ago. The ladies sat down at Carl's table, and the tall, hovering, black-haired waiter was commissioned to bring them some beer.

Carl looked outwardly calm, in reply to Miss Theo Morton's searching glance. "She is not half bad, not bad at all," he reflected. "Improved since I last saw her. The Royal Deanery Theatre is a liberal education." Aloud, he said,

"Well, Jenny, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"I have been rather seedy lately."

"So I was led to suppose. I may remark that you look the picture of robust health. Had too much Bavarian Beer and oysters, I suppose."

"No, but I was really bad; wasn't I, James? Couldn't go to rehearsal one day."

"Quite true, dear. Are you coming to the first night of *Alraschid*, Mr. Corsar?" (Nothing like changing the subject my dear, when they ask questions, she said afterwards to Jenny).

"I don't know."

"Oh, Carl! You must; I've got a lot to say."

"I've got some lines, too," added Miss James.

"With these inducements I suppose it's inevitable."

"Of course," said Jenny. "What *have* you been doing all this time? I have hardly heard of your existence."

"I have been working a good deal."

"In the country?"

"I have only been in the country a few days."

"Hang it, young woman," he thought, "I didn't come here to defend myself, but to pitch into you."

After a good deal of desultory, very uninteresting conversation, Miss Minnie James, to Carl's immense relief, said that she must go, and went. He connected her departure with the sudden vision of a gorgeous youth in the outer part of the restaurant, rather of the *Junior Imberbis* order, and thought no more of the matter. Then he turned to Jenny, and said,

"Now, will you explain?"

"Explain what?"

"Well, that telegram in the first place. Do you know that it made me travel up to London in the middle of the night yesterday, and go wandering on a 'bus to Camberwell this morning?"

"Carl, do please forgive me. I oughtn't to have done it, I know. But I thought, I don't altogether know why, partly because I dreamed it, and partly because you seemed to have forgotten all about me, and never wrote now, or came to see me or anything, that you had—got fond of some other girl. And I was really seedy too when I sent that."

Jenny looked very pitiful and very pretty as she stared sadly at her tall glass of beer. Carl certainly felt that the "row" he proposed having was dissolving and becoming slowly more and more relegated to the regions of procrastination, improbability, and impossibility one after another. He kept up the cold cross-examination style a little longer, however.

"How did you get my address?"

"Maxwell gave it me."

"I wish you would either call a man by his Christian name or put a Mr. to his surname."



"All right, I'll try, Carl. But you must have patience with me. I'm not a lady after all, you know, and can't always do everything the right way as a matter of course, like the lady you know down there at Watermouth."

"What do you know about her?"

"Oh, there is one then! Oh, Carl, I thought so."

"More information from Sandy? Tell me exactly now what he did tell you."

"He told me about the lunches, and fun, and so on you and he had been having at Fenchester, and how you were going down in the holidays to stay with him. He didn't exactly say there was a girl, but I understood it. I'm not sure whether he was trying not to let me know, or to look as if he were, but either way, he might have been sure of my guessing."

Of course he was. Carl's eyes flashed.

"Why should—By Jove!" laughed Carl, "I believe the suspicious and diplomatic young ass has been jealous of me—of me! Go on Jenny."

"That's possible. When I wanted your address—all he had been saying to me and to Sadie, and so on, and the way he *looked*, and everything had made us both very unhappy; I told her to get it out of Mr. Maxwell. She is dreadfully fond of him, you know, and he seems to care for her as he might for a cat or a dog; that's why she likes him, I think. I suppose you're the same. You like me as long as I am pretty and nicely dressed, and do to be seen going about with you when it's convenient, that's all. I wish I were a cat or a dog, then I could always go about with you; then you'd get fond of some lady, and give me away to her as a present, I suppose."

"Please go on with your evidence. We'll go into the cat and dog question afterwards."

"So Sadie asked him for his country address, as if to write to him sometimes herself, and he, knowing Sadie liked him too much ever to annoy him in any way, told her. Then I knew you were staying with him, you see, so his address would do for you. I believe he wanted me to send for you, to get you out of the way, only didn't like to say so straight, after asking you to come himself."

"Funny fellow. One of my best friends too, but he will

be so infernally suspicious where any girls are concerned. And all this Machiavelli business is so d—— silly.”

“But, Carl, you’ll forgive me for bothering you like this? It is silly, I know, but I couldn’t bear the idea of your forgetting all about me—down there with her—and when I saw Sadie’s face after Mr. Maxwell had gone, and she knew very well that he was going straight to see this girl, the one you say he is jealous about, I wondered if I looked like it—because I felt like it. And I dreamed about you, and then I woke up and cried all by myself in the middle of the night, and went over all the things you had said when we went out walks in the fens to see the sun go down far away over the black fields. I remember every word nearly. And I hoped she would like Maxwell, and not you.”

“Well, don’t cry now, for goodness sake. Drink your beer.” Carl was trying hard to keep up the stern, unfeeling tone. It felt like such treachery, such abnegation of all he had said to May to allow himself to be affected by what some other girl said in her suffering.

“Are you fond of her, Carl? Do you like her better than me?”

Carl looked at the strange, sad face of the girl before him, and remembered that she had no father or mother, and dependent on him for ideas, for happiness, and everything. She had never committed the shadow of a flirtation with any other man, many as her inducements had been under the tutelage of her friend Miss James. May was lost for ever. If May were here to advise him now, what would she say when she saw what a hopeless gulf of despair and degradation would open before this wandering, impulsive, fatherless girl if her only competent and sure guide and friend were to leave her to her own devices and the ethics of Miss Minnie James, in the merciless maze of great darkness with glittering points, called London?

“No,” said Carl. He believed in nothing that he could pray to, and he prayed vaguely, to May principally, to help him through this crisis.

“Do you love me still, Carl then, after all?” said Jenny, in a low eager voice, with a spark of wild delight in her dark, sad eyes.

“Yes,” said Carl.

## CHAPTER XV.

“SOME TIME I’LL CALL YOU.”

COLONEL CYRUS SHUTE became an object of great interest and curiosity to the little circle at Watermouth. He always had interesting and appropriate anecdotes in stock, in order to give “cases in point” to any desired topic, and had acquired a tolerably efficient standard by which to gauge the myth-swallowing capacity of his audience. He knew that John Raynham was taken by the abrupt manly style, with an occasional dash of suppressed emotion, about the Old Cause or the Old Flag. He knew that May liked descriptions of mining adventure, of revolvers, of forest fires, and gold ore, put with picturesqueness and quiet humour. The other ladies of the family preferred to instruct Shute in the peculiarities of English civilised society, feeling the same satisfaction as those who teach the blessings of tall hats and trousers to the Papuan, or of soap and total abstinence to the denizens of the London slums. It is pleasanter to instruct than to be instructed as a rule, and Shute assumed the harmless and dove-like demeanour which came from a sensation of shyness he never could quite get rid of in the presence of these well-dressed “high-toned” ladies.

He did not feel so shy with May. She understood his peculiar vein of humour, was not shocked at his most sanguinary tales of the Pacific Slope. In fact, May rather liked him, and was amused by him, and once made him almost “feel mean” at the thought that he was existing on such thoroughly false pretences in the society of this happy, cheery English family. “Don’t care a curse about the men,” he thought. “Waller will take in most things I like to tell him by now, and I can always get a little money out of young cousin Arthur in giving him billiard lessons. Mr. Maxwell

is a bluffing kind of shaloot. I'll give *him* away clean with pleasure, but it does seem mean to go back on that girl. However, business is business, mean or not."

Sandy disliked Shute strongly, partly because May seemed to like him, partly because Shute patronised him, gave him advice, and addressed him as "young man."

Mr. Waller Raynham was staying at the George Hotel, in Watermouth, and Colonel Shute was staying (at Waller's expense) at the same place. They took a good many of their meals at John Raynham's hospitable table, where they had a general invitation. It was a fine and imposing sight, after lunch, on the fine days to see Colonel Shute standing on the lawn with a big cigar under the big black moustache, his feet well apart, his hands behind him, enjoying the "calm repose of nature," and longing for some one to bet with on the perpetual games of tennis. He did not care for so much unproductive exertion himself, but he would like to bet on the players. He did sometimes with Arthur Raynham, and usually won. At billiards he rather astonished that young gentleman, though after pocketing a few small bets he was good enough to decline, in a paternal way, to take any more of his money, though he took great pains to teach him to play. At billiards, too, he had an opportunity of showing "Young Mr. Maxwell" that he, Sandy, "couldn't do just everything" better than everybody else, as Shute suspected him of believing he could.

Sandy was now, since Carl's departure ("for which praise and glory be," said Cyrus), the only person who suspected the genuineness of Colonel Shute's wars and rumours of wars, and the reality of his vast wealth (largely now due to the "Anna Maria" Company). Shute perfectly saw that Sandy disliked, doubted, and tried to snub him, and took a proportionate interest in Sandy's welfare. He used the hard little eyes behind their gold and glass fortifications enough to find out that "Young Mr. Maxwell was foolin' around after Miss May. Yes. Go on, Young Mr. Maxwell. You think, with your eddication and your singin', and your talkin' and playin' and speakin' with tongues and prophesyin', you can always see me and see a hundred better. But some time I'll Call you."

Otherwise, Cyrus almost forgot sometimes, in the pleasantness and peace of the little orbit in which he now circulated,



that there was such a thing (or rather, that there *wasn't* such a thing) as the "Anna Maria" Company. He had asked no one to invest in it, no one to become directors, &c. He had as yet simply allowed the rumour to spread that it was one of the principal sources of his own wealth, and that he was unwilling that shares should be taken, wishing to keep them in his own hands. So much so, that he occasionally depreciated the concern, and spoke of the expense and risk of gold-mining, and the strong chance of persons losing their money thereby. This, of course, led many persons to think, and to tell each other confidentially, that Cyrus Shute's pie was so nice a one that he wished to keep all other fingers out of it. Precisely what Cyrus meant them to think. Then, naturally, they began to wish to insert their fingers into that pie. Precisely what Cyrus meant them to wish.

One fine, still summer afternoon, the regiment to which Holroyd and Cameron belonged, gave a dance, to which Mrs. Raynham, her two elder daughters and Arthur went. May and her father stayed at home, and consequently Sandy. And John Raynham sat under the elms smoking a cigar and feeling very happy and comfortable, while May, in a picturesque embroidered costume, and Sandy in flannels, with a crimson handkerchief round his waist and a flexible broad black hat curved carefully at the right angles and directions on his head, was her opponent.

At the usual hour, *i.e.*, about half-an-hour before the afternoon-tea, which Cyrus Shute had been instructed to like, as part of modern civilisation and more wholesome and beneficial than whisky, that gentleman appeared, having left Waller at the Watermouth Yacht Club, after lunch thereat. He wore a tall hat and a black frock-coat unbuttoned. He always did.

May said, "You would walk up Mont Blanc in a tall hat and an unbuttoned frock-coat, I do believe."

Cyrus replied calmly, "I did."

Of course a long cigar (paid for by Waller at the club) protruded from under the black moustache. He was allowed to smoke everywhere. It was a sort of compromise between Mrs. and the Misses Raynham (the Missionaries), on the one part, and Cyrus Shute (the savage) on the other, that if he would take afternoon tea instead of whisky, he should be allowed to smoke long cigars "all the time." You see what

a condition of playful submission and familiarity existed now on the part of the warrior and adventurer, the Lord of the Pistol and Right Bower, the Brass-headed Corpse-maker of the Pacific Slope. Here he was taking afternoon-tea, and being instructed like a tame bear by two or three ladies in what he "mustn't" do. Wealth is a power, "yea," said Cyrus, "it is a big thing."

May nodded to him amicably, as she rushed about racquet in hand, giving back Sandy's vicious volleys. Mr. Raynham arose and said,

"Ah, Colonel Shute! How are you? Come and sit down."

Sandy took no notice of Cyrus at all, making his intense pre-occupation in the game a pretext. This was not lost on Colonel Shute, who said,

"Pretty sight, ain't it? Almost makes one feel young again."

"I shouldn't think you had much difficulty in feeling that, Shute. Why, to me you are a young man yet—and I don't feel old."

"Sir, I am forty-three last Thanksgiving. But forty-three years of my kind of life make one older than sixty of yours. I have fought; I have been beaten. I have lost all that was dear to me, I have been in prison (this was true) for the good old Cause (this was not true, unless fleecing one's fellow-man be the good old Cause), like St. Paul, I have been beaten with rods (and he might have added, ridden on a rail), though I guess I ain't like him in most other ways. It's hard not to get worldly, whether you want to or not, sometimes, and a sight like that washes the grit and muck out of one, and makes one wish one wasn't mostly hard pan and no gold. I loved a woman, sir, once. Never loved any since—well there, that ain't entertaining to other folks, nor it ain't much of a story after all."

"Go on Colonel. I don't wish to be prying, but you interest my curiosity, and it demands satisfaction."

"Well, there ain't much story. I was an out-post down the Potomac—she was round there tendin' the wounded or some-thin'. Somebody saw me and drew on me, 'tother side. She saw it. Took the d——d Yankee bullet herself, 'stead o' me. Haven't hankered after any other woman since—much. See?"

Mr. Raynham nodded his head in a silent, sympathetic way, and said,

"I see. I beg your pardon for insisting on the story. It's a beautiful one though."

"Well—it is." Cyrus thought it a very pretty story indeed. He had read it in an American newspaper some twenty years ago, and made a memorandum in a book. "Woman. Bullet. Potomac. Useful—pathetic. To be learned off right away, for telling of self."

"Now them two," pursued the Colonel, "they seem to get on elegant at that game, don't they?"

"Yes. Oh, yes. They've been playmates ever since they were children. They almost seem to me to be children still."

"Yes, but they're not. I never had any children of my own; but most I've seen grew up, when Providence didn't take 'em early, in the form of measles, or distemper, or sech. Well, these are grown up. Do you mean 'em to be playmates all the time, for life, if I may ask?"

"Well, it certainly has never occurred to me that they should—er—marry. That would require very serious consideration before I allowed it."

"It's occurred to them, any way."

"But how do you know this?"

"Usual signs. More evident, of course, to an occasional spectator, like me, than to you who see 'em all the time. Secluded walks in forests primevial, represented in this case by a portion of your magnificent estate. Saw 'em once, before I had time to turn the other way and get absorbed in fungus-hunting, greet one another with an holy kiss. Well, it's real mean of me to spoil sport, and young Mr. Maxwell is a clever young man with gifts. I hope he has many prospects, though he don't like me. Guess I'm too rough a lot for the like of him, and yet Miss May, God bless her, don't seem to find me too rough to talk to. If I've said more than I oughter I'm sorry, Mr. Raynham, real sorry, but you're the girl's father, and it's your right to know it all. And now my responsibility is clear."

"I am very much obliged to you, Colonel Shute."

Prout arrived with the afternoon tea, and the tennis game was interrupted for the administration of tea by May, who said—

"How do you do, Colonel Shute?"

"I thank you, Miss May. Very well, indeed, and very glad to see you. Very glad to see you, Mr. Maxwell."

Sandy, hot, with a racket in one hand, which was an excuse for not shaking Colonel Shute's, gave that person a rather superior and contemptuous recognition.

"Tea will be through directly," said May. "I suppose you will have some?"

"I thank you. I was about to say, Miss May, that I shall probably have a drink with you—of tea, for the last time in this very pleasant place. I must go right back to the city to-morrow."

"To London?"

"Yes. Bin wasting time here quite pleasantly. Haven't noticed how much of it I was wasting. See, Miss May, you have no idea what business and work means now, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, I have. Business means talking to somebody in a room, with sherry on the table, while somebody else waits in an anteroom. Work means writing letters to somebody else who is to come and talk, with sherry on the table. Then somebody pays some money, and several people shake hands very hard, and drink some more sherry and laugh. I've seen it done."

"Well, substituting whisky as the form of refreshment, that is not a bad description—of my way of transacting. But it's got to be done, and as your pappa will tell you, if you want to get right through with anything, you must be there yourself and know it all."

"Very true," said Mr. Raynham, a little absently. He seemed to be working algebraic problems, in which two known and one unknown quantity figured. The known quantities were May and Sandy. The unknown, which he was trying to work out, was Cyrus Shute. "We shall be sorry to lose you," he added, "all of us, I think. Hope to see you down here again some day, eh?"

"I hope you will."

Tea was consumed. Sandy sat on the grass, on the side remote from Colonel Shute, and conversed inaudibly with May, who looked embarrassed, as if she were being made a participator in an unwilling rudeness, and told Sandy he



shouldn't. Whereat he said he didn't care. After tea Sandy said—

"Let's have another game," and stood up, racket in hand, making a ball run up and down his arm.

May followed with a little hesitation. Mr. Raynham and Cyrus walked about talking, and finally disappeared towards the house, seemingly with the view of taking a glass of wine.

"I don't think I *can* play any more," said May; "I'm so tired after sitting down. You don't feel it till after you've rested for a time."

"Then, my dear baby, don't let's play. Come for a walk in the grounds."

"Very well. But not long, because it looks so funny if I'm not in in good time to dress."

"Does it? Oh, well, it won't look funny soon. It'll look perfectly natural when they're used to it."

"Sandy, when are you going to tell papa?"

"Tell him what?"

"About—you and me."

"I don't know. I'm thinking it over."

"I think you ought—soon."

"So do I—soon. Let's get among the trees, then we shall look like people in a modern Academy picture." And Sandy gave a shake, as if to disburden himself of responsibilities.

"Is that a desirable state of things?"

"Yes. Come along. Besides, there's a nice secluded seat there, which was made for us, I think. Here we are, come and sit down. There."

"Don't, Sandy! some one is sure to be looking."

"Bosh. It is a Sahara of solitude. Give me another."

This sort of thing went on for about an hour. These two lovers cooed and gibbered to one another in the ordinary way, said the inevitable things, and repeated them the regulation number of times, losing the memory of time and responsibility while tracing the gorgeous hues of that stormy and splendid cloudland in which rises the dawn of love. A pretty picture. A young man and a young maid, sitting on a bench in the friendly and concealing shade of a gigantic yew. She half leaning across him, with a small ear hearkening to the loud, healthy "lubb, dup! lubb, dup!" of a heart that had made

the same intelligent remark to some two score other little ears, some with dusky, some with golden ringlets round them; playing with and re-arranging the hair some fourscore other little hands, sun-tanned and white, had fingered, listening to the fervent, caressing words long practice brought glibly to those lips that rolled out French r's in an irresistible low murmur. He looking and listening with half-awed wonder at that real modesty, real freshness, and real fervour of first love which had a sacredness almost beyond his power to reverence. He comparing mentally her demeanour, words and attitudes to those of the Others, wondering how it was he never had experienced this sort of thing before, feeling how infinitely above and beyond the frivolous, transitory frailties which had strewn his path so long, this new, strong, tender feeling was, which sometimes made him feel ashamed, and once or twice made him even for a few moments forget self. A pretty picture, and one of which there are many replicas.

"I'm afraid you've got hold of a rather useless fellow, Baby."

"I'm afraid so. Never mind. I dare say you can do something if you try."

Sandy had not expected to be agreed with in this matter-of-fact way. He expected to be reminded of his various accomplishments and many excellences, and to be told that there was really nothing in the world of which he was not capable of immediately assuming the control.

At this period it happened that Colonel Shute was strolling about the premises, his gold glasses peering into perspective, with the aim of finding these two truants. His object was twofold. He had undertaken to give Sandy a message from Mr. Raynham, if he should succeed in finding him, on his way out; and he wished, for his own gratification, to say good-bye to May.

"And if I find one of 'em, I guess I'll find two," he reflected. He very soon noticed them between the branches of the yew. The artlessly obvious, yea conspicuous, hiding-places, thought complete and sufficient by lovers, are proverbial; a room where anybody may enter at any moment; a dining-table, where they join hands under the cloth, to the delight of everybody, and then whisper; railway tunnels,

where they seem to think it is dark, and not to know quite how long the obscurity will last, but rather to suppose three-quarters of an hour. Here a comparison to a well-authenticated habit of the ostrich may fitly be made.

Having espied his quarry, Colonel Shute changed his direction, so as to approach them from the front. This necessitated a detour of some distance, as there was no convenient "cover" for such skirmishing, or rather scout-duty, in the immediate vicinity of the yew. Still, to gain the direct approach, and lose all suspicion of being a spy, the trouble was worth taking. He was not noticed by the two young people until he was too near for them to pretend not to see him, and go away.

"Hullo!" said Sandy.

"Mr. Maxwell, sir. Mr. Raynham wants to speak with you right away. Better hurry."

"Shan't hurry," murmured Sandy, sullenly.

"Oh yes, do go, Sandy; don't be silly," whispered May.

"Can I speak to you for a few minutes, Miss May?" asked Shute, in a matter-of-fact un-emotional tone—the tone he always talked in.

"Certainly, Colonel Shute."

"I thank you." And Cyrus waited, while Sandy went slowly away, his mouth full of cursing and bitterness, and himself strongly inclined to shed Cyrus Shute's blood. Cyrus stood still, chewing his cigar and looking benevolently at the retreating Sandy through his glasses. When Sandy was well out of earshot he spoke:

"This is quite a nice bench, Miss May. Will you allow me to sit on it?"

"Oh, of course."

"Will you do me the favour to sit on it too? I talk easier sitting."

"Very well."

Sandy turned round and looked at this juncture, and saw the re-occupation of the bench. And he went into Mr. Raynham's study in a very bad temper indeed.

"Well, I'm right down sorry I'm quitting out of here, Miss May."

"I'm right down sorry too," said May, gravely, in the same tone. Cyrus twitched, and liked her all the better for it.

"Ah, now you are trying to give me away. Well, you are

about the only person on this world who succeeds." Then, after a pause, "You know I like you, Miss May. I'm old enough to be your father, so you needn't mind my saying that. In fact, I feel as if I'd like to be a relative of yours—an elderly relative, say uncle. How'd Uncle Cyrus sound?"

"I don't like uncles. All the uncles in stories are rather a bad lot."

"Well, I'm a bad lot; so that's approprit."

"Yes, I suppose you are. Yes, I think, on reflection, you will do for an uncle. I'm going to call you Uncle Cyrus. Now tell me some of the worst things you have done. I want to be told stories."

"Is that so?" quoth Cyrus. "You shall be. What special brand of iniquity do you hanker after? Homicide? Did I ever tell you about how I shot Jack Dillon down Leadville?"

"No. Who was he?"

"By occupation a county sheriff. A small, fair-haired chap, with a kind of stammer, and the mildest possible tone. Shot fifty-four men, he had, in his time. Well, he came into the theatre bar with a culle'd man, where I happened to be having a drink. Jest after the war, that was, and feelings was bitter, and I made a remark to the bar-keep that I didn't know culle'd men got served in that bar. Jack Dillon turned round and said, 'Who the h—ank are you, anyhow?' (Cyrus is supposed to have meant to say blank, but to have brought in the correction a little too late.) I said I was Colonel Cyrus Shute, lately serving under General Bewryguard in the 14th Texas Cavalry. He said I could go to—well——"

"To what we will agree to call 'hank,'" suggested May. Cyrus twitched.

"That is so. At that moment it occurred to those present, with the exception of we two, to quit that bar. We each had a navy six."

"In England you would have each had a navy nine, in all probability—later," remarked May, demurely.

"Barrels?"

"No. Tails. Go on, Uncle Cyrus."

"Miss May, you oughta been born an American gell. You're too smart for this country. Well, the bar-keep dived under the bar and got out his Remington and waited calmly. 'See now,' he said, 'you chaps can get out of here—go on,



have your shootin' somewhere else. You'll get breaking the glasses.' That started it, and Jack shot him first. Then I shot at Jack, and hit his left leg; didn't hurt it much, and he got my right hand—knocked off two fingers while I had to take the pistol in my left. Next shot got him through the head and dropped him."

"Is that all?"

"That is all."

"I think I could invent a better story than that, Uncle Cyrus."

"Yes?"

"Show me your right hand." Cyrus showed a right hand with large gold rings on it, and much black hair.

"I don't miss those two fingers, somehow, there are five here." Cyrus twitched, and gravely remarked—

"Miss May, I'm a freak of nature. I was born with seven fingers on my right hand."

"Ah, Uncle Cyrus, you have 'given me away' at last. I think I must go in now."

"Well, I'm sorry; real sorry. Business is taking me away for quite a while; but I shall see you again, you bet. Say, Miss May, is there anything in the Prayer Book or anywhere, against Uncles being kissed before they go away on business?" May looked grave.

"I don't think you know any better, Uncle Cyrus, or I should be very angry with you. I shall be, if you talk like that again. Remember that. I like you very well; but I mean what I say."

"Well, good-bye, anyhow."

"Good-bye."

And May shook hands with, and was rather sorry to part with this unscrupulous, but occasionally entertaining, liar and rascal.

For his part, he thought, as he walked to the town, "Young Mr. Maxwell is having a bad time just now, I take it." Then he smoked and pondered, working out in his mind a peculiarly brilliant idea which had occurred to him. This was nothing less than the conversion of Miss May Raynham into Mrs. Cyrus Shute.

"See now," he argued, "how it looks. Pappa, a respectable, high-toned, rich English gentleman. Uncle Waller,

member of the legislature—look well on circulars, that name, I take it, as a director, a thing he's quite fool enough to be proud to be. The gell's a pretty gell, and a smart gell, and almost deserves the promotion—she does so. My sakes! as Mrs. Cy. she'd double the shareholders in the 'Anna Maria.' Thought dry humour and pathos would suck in the average English crowd. But it's done more. It's sucked in Pappa Raynham, and I'm d—— if it shall stop there now. He shall give me the gell, with a few thousands on allotment, and the rest fully paid up in the good old death-bed style—as much rest, that is, as the 'Anna Maria' leaves him."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HOW SANDY MADE SUNDRY GREAT RESOLUTIONS.

As was stated in the last chapter, Sandy went into Mr. Raynham's study in a very bad temper, a condition which did not become him. He was also rather hot, from walking fast, and from general agitation, and felt distinctly taken at a disadvantage, when he found John Raynham sitting cool and comfortable, in a white waistcoat, with a puzzled frown upon his brow.

"You want me?" said Sandy.

"Ah, Sandy. Yes. Sit down. I want to talk to you about two or three things, and I thought I'd take this nice quiet time when everybody is out."

Sandy sat silent and waited to hear what was coming.

"Well now, about your finances—eh? You haven't been paying much attention to that subject lately, I think?"

"Never did pay any, I'm afraid." said Sandy, shortly, adding, rather loftily, "I have not got a commercial mind."

"No. I never thought you had. That's rather a pity. You see, if you can't pay any attention to the management of your own affairs, you can't be considered fit to manage those of any—other person depending on you—a wife, for example; can you?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean simply what I say. But I ask you if the question is not justified?"

"I should like to know why you ask it at all?"

"Should you? Well, I will tell you. Now have you the slightest idea of the proportion your expenditure, your debts, and your capital bear to one another?"

"I had a general notion—a kind of mental account."

"A mental account always added up so as to leave a liberal

surplus in your favour? I'm afraid that general notion is not valuable. You see I am—at any rate have been—a man of business, and I like to see things done and expressed accurately and clearly. You are not an infant, and I have not had the control of your money since you came of age, and you are quite free to throw it into the sea if you like. Still, as the old and trusted friend of your dead father, I don't like to see the process going on, and feel bound to utter my protest, especially as your university career is now over, and nothing very definite has come of it, and it is high time you faced your case for yourself. You have amused yourself at Audit College for three or more years, and it is now high time, as you are no longer a boy, to go out into the world and do something."

"If I get a good place in my Finals it ought to do something for me."

"Have you seen to-day's paper?"

"No; I hardly ever look at the paper down here."

"The paper 'down here' is, in all respects, identical with the paper anywhere else, and will equally repay your perusal. Look at this."

He's unusually snappish, thought Sandy, as he took the paper, folded so as to display his class-list. Sandy scanned the first class carefully, and seemed surprised not to find his name in it. An inspection of the second and third was similarly unrewarded. Below the honour-classes came the designation—"Allowed the Ordinary Degree—Alexander Maxwell, Audit," in isolated and unpleasant distinction. Sandy said nothing, but searched for words profane enough to express his feelings.

"You see now," continued John Raynham, in the cold "business" tone he had adopted throughout the interview, "that the lavish expenditure in which you have indulged at College, doubtless with the best of intentions, however indefinite they seem to have been, has been quite unproductive. That part of your career, therefore, may be considered as practically wasted. Let us now look at your prospects. You had a certain capital, small, but still a capital, under your late father's will. While I was your trustee and guardian, it was invested by me, and you enjoyed the proceeds in the form of an allowance. When you came of age, you left it



precisely as it was, without inquiring into the nature of the investment, without inquiring into the amount of the principal, or into the possible depreciations it might undergo by the fluctuations in prices, although I pointed out to you several times how necessary all these things were."

This, being the literal truth, made Sandy more angry—he had not quite settled with whom—than an exaggerated or false statement would have done.

"You, then, regularly overdrew your income, and lived at the rate of about twice as much a year as you really had. How you spent it, whether profitably or otherwise, you best know. I know this much, that you have a London club of the most expensive order, that you seem to belong to nearly every society and club in the University, and that you always have the best of clothes and cigars and plenty of them. You also keep a horse and a man-servant. I occasionally called your attention to these matters with no definite result, in the way of greater care on your part. You have now so seriously reduced your capital, that you will no longer be able to do these things, and must at once seek some occupation. You might purchase a sort of apprenticeship to a brewery or other sound firm, which I could ascertain the respectability and solvency of for you, for example."

"I couldn't do that."

"What can you do? You see you must live."

"Yes. I don't mind admitting that," replied Sandy, grimly.

"And you might meet—some day—some young lady, whom you might wish to marry. Now it is scarcely necessary for me to tell you that such a course is out of the question now—that no father or guardian in his senses would permit you to marry his daughter or ward under such circumstances. Do you perfectly understand me?"

"Perfectly," said Sandy, grinding his teeth, and thinking of May and Cyrus Shute on that bench under the yew tree. "You have been listening to some lie of that insolent black-guard——"

"I am not in the habit of sharing confidences of a family nature with insolent blackguards."

"Well, what is the upshot of all this? What have I got left?"

"You have now in the bank, supposing all your debts to be discharged, which of course they may be—I do not say they are not (as a matter of fact they were not), about three hundred and seventy pounds. With that for a basis, carefully used, you might enter into some such business as I have described, and redeem the failure your life has been yet, you have abilities, and if you could only acquire perseverance and accuracy you might do something."

"If I could acquire a pair of wings, I might with practice fly," retorted Sandy, rather rudely. Then he added, "Have you anything else to say?"

"No. But I should just think this over, if I were you, and decide on something. I shall be very glad to advise you."

Sandy left the room, and slammed the door after him. He made, in fact, that kind of exit which is often described as "flouncing" out. And he went up to his room, and began packing a portmanteau in frenzied haste and wonderful confusion. When tired of this, he summoned Miklos to finish it. The "finishing" was a convenient allegorical mode of speech, implying that Miklos was to take all the things out and put them in again properly, so that some power short of a hydraulic ram might shut the portmanteau. This Miklos did and departed to convey it and his own small and exquisitely neat baggage—(a parcel, not a female)—to the station.

Miklos saw that something was wrong, and was discreetly dumb. He knew his master pretty well now, and sympathised with him. Miklos looked on good, worthy, sensible old John Raynham much as Scapin looked on all fathers and husbands, as persons of the Sganarelle and Dandin type, mere encumbrances in the path of gallantry. This cheery old cynic, with the aquiline bony brown face, the dark smiling eyes and the long grizzling moustache, was not perhaps the best confidential servant for a young gentleman of Sandy's quicksilver temperament. Miklos was an old soldier, an old intriguer, a man who was steeped to the eyes in all evil knowledge, and regarded all kinds of moral scruple as subjects for derision. But he was clean, punctual, tidy, and ingenious, devoted to Sandy, and capable of grooming a horse, scrubbing a floor, cooking a dinner, washing clothes, putting up shelves, or carving brackets, making up bouquets, acting if necessary as

a private detective in a small way, and, above all, capable of holding his tongue.

Sandy put on his hat and walked down stairs. In the hall he met May, standing under the circle of javelins on the wall, fingering the letters which the afternoon post had brought. She was laughing a little, apparently at the recollection of some joke. When Sandy appeared, she looked up at him as he came down the last two or three stairs and said—

“Sandy! what is it?”

“Well, it’s this. Your father has been talking to me about that most interesting of topics, myself. It appears that I have no money, or deuced little. It appears that no parent or guardian would be justified in allowing his daughter or ward to marry me. He all but hinted that I was steeped in profligacy, and distinctly informed me that my life had been a failure—a fact of which I was dimly aware—which didn’t make it more enjoyable to be told so by some one else. He is kind enough to admit that I have abilities, and to imply that I have not perseverance or accuracy enough to use them. Finally, he suggests my going away and Doing something.” This in a very injured tone.

“Well, but—that is quite right. Men ought to do something. I’m dreadfully sorry to hear of your money bother, and I don’t know what I shall do when you are gone, but I think you ought to go and do something, just to show that you *have* got abilities and perseverance too. Besides, you know, you can’t live on nothing, and you certainly can’t marry on it.”

“Is that all the sympathy you’ve got to give?” said Sandy bitterly. “Why didn’t you say ‘I told you so?’ It would have expressed it all more compactly, and been about as consoling! Good-bye, May.”

And Sandy, still in spiritual storm, strode out through the front doorway, and did not hear a half-crying voice behind him say,—

“Oh, Sandy! come back to me!”

And then May went upstairs to her own room and snatched up Peter the cat, and cried into his back and felt somehow that the whole trouble was her fault, and persuaded herself that she had done Sandy some deadly injury, which of course was remote from the truth.



As for Sandy, he walked at a stormy pace to the station, and found on arrival there that he had the privilege of waiting fifty-three minutes for a train, which did not improve his temper, more especially as it made him feel that he had made rather a fool of himself by dashing along a dusty road on a hot afternoon without the slightest notion what time the train might be. So he walked fiercely up and down a gluey asphalt platform, which was slowly approaching boiling point in the hot sunshine, and thought very bitter and angry thoughts. He was rather angry with himself, distinctly angry with John Raynham, disappointed in May, and thirsted for the blood of Cyrus Shute, who was, he felt sure, "at the bottom of all this." Oh yes, Sandy! Cyrus Shute wasted your money, didn't he? Cyrus Shute "allowed" you "the ordinary degree." Cyrus Shute has sins enough of his own to bear, and bears them very well too, but that is no reason for blaming him for other people's.

Miklos was standing motionless and statuesque by the little heap of luggage. Sandy stopped as he passed him and said—

"Here, get a couple of second tickets. We are poor now and may as well begin economising at once. I shan't be worth staying with soon. You'll have to seek your own fortune somewhere, and let me go to the devil my own way."

Miklos smiled and spake with tongues: "I think the gracious lord (Sandy) will go more comfortably and expeditiously to the devil with me to attend on his worshipful person. Moreover by—(here strange oaths)—I will never leave him."

"Good. Leaving many girls behind you this time, Miklos?"

"No, no, no. Besides, gracious lord, it is not the girls one is leaving, it is the girls one is approaching that matter. The future is of more consequence than the past to us—and occasionally to them."

"Happy old scamp! Your cheerful ethics are a cordial to the wounded spirit. It is the future which matters, d—the past! Miklos, we'll do something. We'll make such a future between us that the past shall be as the run before jumping. We have had a long run. We will have a long



and a high jump now. We'll go—let's see, we might go to Mexico, or South America, anywhere where there is war and chance. We can both speak Spanish—you are a soldier—I can ride, and shoot, and use all weapons. Miklos, I will be President of a Republic, and you Commander of the Forces, and we'll be famous as Drake or Pizarro, from China to Peru, and make a mighty nation, and discipline all the ruffians into an army, kick out the priests, and lead a continent to civilisation. We'll send over here for all the good men we know, and raise such a crew that the fame of our name shall ring across the oceans of both hemispheres, until somebody shoots us. Then they will write about us as the last of the Gentlemen-adventurers!"

"Take your seats for the London train!"

Here there strolled on to the gluey asphalt, coolly and leisurely, the small sturdy form and inquiring face of Cyrus Shute, who, ignoring the presence of Sandy, got into a first-class smoking compartment. Sandy was following, no doubt with a view to giving Colonel Shute the advantage of candid criticism, when the guard asked to see his ticket, arrested his progress towards Cyrus's car and remarked: "Second be'ind, sir." There seemed to be a conspiracy that day to ruffle Sandy's temper.

Cyrus appeared to travel without luggage. It was true that he kept several immense trunks at an immense hotel in London, where letters and visitors arrived for him, where they were very proud of Cyrus, and were glad to have him, having ascertained from the society papers that he was a Western millionaire, but he travelled as he stood. There was a comb in what he called his vest pocket. He was shaved always by a skilled artificer. He had a patent celluloid collar, which washed in five minutes and dried in ten. On the subject of general cleanliness he had, as on most other subjects, no fastidious scruples. He had never seen any one take a daily morning tub, but he had heard such a thing familiarly alluded to in England, and considered it a gratuitously uncomfortable, unhealthy, and insane practice. And as Cyrus put his feet on the cushion of the first-class smoking compartment, and spat on its floor, he remarked:—

"Cyrus Shute, sir. You are quite smart, indeed. You

are pro-gressive. You have seen Corsar junior clear. You have cleared young Mr. Maxwell. That's all. The rest can stop, I want 'em. Wonder how Corsar senior is getting along? He don't write. Now, why don't he? Why the H—ank—ah, that was Miss May's joke. Well, she is a real elegant piece—quite a sweet young lady.”

And as Sandy lit one of those highly-coloured, strong-flavoured clay-pipes he affected, with a redolent mixture of cavendish and honeydew which clogged the air with a faint thick odour of ambergris with which it had been flavoured, he said to Miklos—

“What became of Mr. Corsar the other night?”

“He went to London, and that is all I know.” (It is not necessary to continually reproduce the circumlocutions, the third persons singular, and other paraphernalia of reverence which adorned the conversation of Miklos Debrecza.)

“Wonder where the devil he is! Why doesn't he write or something? Never mind, when we are President of Mexico he shall come and instruct—in the State Bi-sexual University which we shall establish—teach them the art of being an all round good man. Here we go! I wonder if we shall ever be here again?” Sandy chattered cheerfully nearly all the way to London about wild projects of adventure, about London, about the female sex, about tobacco, and about everything, for he was desperately sad.

The loss of money could be remedied. His injured self-esteem might be restored. His career might yet become as a comet's fiery trail across the darkness of common-place, though as yet the priming of the comet had seemed damp and spluttery. But what lay upon his whirling will and mind, dizzied as by a sudden fall, was the old picture of the young girl nursing a wounded kitten, his May, his little girl, who had half-tamed that wild heart to her loving hand, now perhaps to be lost and never found again. He felt that he could never forget her, that the memory of her would be as the white moon's beautiful shimmer across a turbulent sea. He would ride the dark waters before him with the ever-present ghost of his lost love to keep watch over him, to keep his hand firm on the helm, to keep his eyes fixed straight forward and stop his ears from the singing sirens.

No more roses that trailed in the mire for him with the lilly that lay on his heart. He would do something great and grand, and leave dilettante art and pedantry, golden idle days, the "burden of bought kisses," and all the waste, and failure, and shame of the old days behind for ever. And many other original metaphors, high hopes, and great resolutions arose in Sandy's mind. How much they were fulfilled or forgotten we shall sometime partially see.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HOW HE KEPT THEM.

WHEN Sandy arrived in town he sent Miklos off with the luggage, telling him to get a room at the Charing-Cross Hotel. He himself wandered out of the Waterloo Terminus to think over what he had better do, what would be the first step towards that ideal monument of faith, love, purity and glorious achievement on whose pedestal he proposed one day standing. He began by going into a public-house and asking for two pennyworth of whiskey. Still economical, you observe. The man in the bar, a sporting character in shirt-sleeves, who was arguing with a friend about something a person they familiarly called Freddy Archer had or had not done, replied—

“We don’t make two’s of whisky.”

“Oh, damn economy! give me a curacoa and brandy, then.”

On feeling in his pocket to pay for this, he found he had nearly thirty shillings in various coins. “By Jove!” he thought, “can do lots of things with thirty shillings.” Then he considered what, under the circumstance, he would do with thirty shillings. In the first place he would get on to the other side of the river. With this aim he walked over Waterloo Bridge and loafed meditatively along the Strand. At the corner of Wellington Street, he became conscious that a tall, slender and elegant young lady, with a minute green plush reticule, was saying, “How are you, Mr. Maxwell?” Sandy took off his hat, and found himself saying, “Hullo!” in an audible tone to Miss Minnie James. And then he was affected by the sudden shock which Carl had felt before. This girl was the ghost of May, as he now saw. He had hardly looked at her before.



"Where are you going?" he said.

"Well, it's getting on for seven. I was thinking of going into the Bavarian and dining."

"Strange coincidence! So was I. Come along."

"Oh, thanks awfully."

"How's Miss Morton?"

"Oh, *she's* all right. We've had a row. We don't speak now."

"Any use asking why?"

"No, [not much." The reasons being, first, that Jenny had been put in a certain prominent position on the stage, which Miss James had considered herself better qualified to fill; secondly, that Miss James had vainly endeavoured to detach the affections of Carl Corsar from the said Jenny, it followed that Miss James could not very well explain to a comparative stranger (though she did not, of course, hesitate to dine with said comparative stranger) the reasons of the row.

So they went to the Bavarian Café Restaurant, and had dinner. Miss James sat upright, and conducted herself very prettily, taking off long black-silk gloves that made her hands and arms strongly suggest a well-groomed cat's hands and arms; taking off and hanging-up her "Henri II." hat, too—not to display her beautiful and saintly aureole of hair, but because it was warm weather—and making herself generally at home. Sandy argued that this was no breach of faith to May. On the contrary, this was a concrete memory of May, a fleshly ghost of her, and that was the only reason he tolerated the fleshly ghost's company. He would appreciate the bodily resemblance all the more, no doubt, from the spiritual unlikeness. Perhaps this was part of that moon trail which, by a new and forcible metaphor he had imagined May to cast for ever as a path of light across the dark and turbulent waters of the future. At any rate it showed he had not forgotten her, or he would never take the trouble to justify himself in using this peculiar means of keeping her memory green.

Oh my poor, generous, selfish, laughing, weak, wild and desperately sorrowful Sandy! May, your own innocent, loving and merry "Baby" is looking from her window across the shimmering summer sea, and weeping because you never heard her say, "Oh, Sandy! come back to me," and wonder-

ing if the great joy and gladness that filled her life for a few days was only as a wave that has broken and written its mark on the sand of the shore by that desolate summer sea, never to be washed out again. And a thought comes to her that she knows she can trust you for ever, her boy, who played with her, grew up with her and taught her all the pleasant pastimes she will never care for again, and taught her at last to love you. And that thought makes her almost happy again, as she plays your favourite tunes by herself, and the sky becomes golden, and the sea is no more desolate, and she tells it to carry the message to you, and all over the world if you will, that she will always love you and trust you, and never believe what any shall say against you. What message shall the river, rotten and fetid with the filth and greed and gain and crime and nameless horror of the great city give back from you to the sea? Will the sea dare to take it and throw it along with some foul dead jetsam at her feet?

The merciless sea, the great moving tomb, rhythmic with the old heart-beats of all the dead it covers for ever, is more merciful than that, more merciful than you. She will never know that her iron idol has feet of clay.

For a "ghost" and a "memory" Miss Minnie James has a hearty but selective appetite. Her simple repast consists of six oysters, a *bisque d'ecrevisses*, some cutlets of pork and fried potatoes, a green salad with small onions in it, some Camembert cheese, and two large glasses of Bavarian beer. At the conclusion of the repast she thanks Sandy awfully, states that she will be awfully late at the theatre, and suggests that a hansom will be the most rapid and agreeable mode of con-  
rection for her. She also asks Sandy to "come round to the show," later on in the evening, to call for her, in which case she will do him the honour of supping with him. Sandy agrees to this, pays for the repast, also for a hansom to convey Miss James to the theatre, where an impatient public of *Senior Calvi* and *Junior Imberbes*, awaits and will soon applaud her appearance in *Alraschid*, in which piece she is at present exhibiting her talents and person, more especially the latter. And Sandy is left to his reflections.

With them for companions he walked slowly down the Strand towards Charing Cross. Being bound rigidly to a course of economy he buys a rose of a flower girl at the

top of Villiers Street for sixpence, and inserts it in his button-hole. Then he walks to his club, is respectfully recognised by one or two *Junior Imberbes*, who sip champagne and kummel, writes a note to the secretary resigning his membership, takes a last cigar and drink, glances at the *Sporting Times*, not because it amuses him, but out of a sense of what is appropriate to the situation. As he leaves, he meets young Arthur Raynham, beautifully dressed, with a grave Piccadilly expression of countenance, and a three shilling bouquet in his evening coat.

"Hallo, Sandy! where are you going to?"

"To the devil, I believe," replies Sandy, who likes *coups-de-théâtre*.

"What's the row; hard up?"

"More or less."

"Ah! They've all got it. Never met with such a season for hard-up-ness as this."

"How many seasons do you remember, then?" asks Sandy, with a not unkind smile, for he likes this absurdly dignified boy with a monkey's caricature of elderly club manners, flavoured with modern "form."

"Can't remember now. What are you doing to-night?"

"I'm engaged to-night."

"Ah! You would be. Good business?"

"Matter of opinion."

"I say, where are you going now?"

"To the Charing-Cross, to change."

"I'll walk a little way with you."

"You are very kind."

"Don't mention it. Have a liquor first?"

"Had one."

"Have another with me."

"No, thanks. And don't *you* take to miscellaneous liquoring between meals."

"Oh, rot! Which way are you going? Piccadilly or Pall Mall?"

"Pall Mall, come along if you're coming. But you seem to be going to some festivity or other from your costume. Don't let me hinder you."

"Oh no. I always dress in the evening. I may drop in at the Deanery later."

"Oh may you!"

"Yes, why not? But I say, look here, Sandy, don't be offended if I say something."

"Wire in, my boy."

"Of course your affairs are not exactly any business of mine——"

"Not exactly."

"And I don't know exactly what you are up to here, though I can bally well guess. But are you quite certain it's all square somewhere else? I know some men are less particular than others, but I draw certain lines—in short, are you engaged to my cousin May?"

"No, I'm not."

"Oh well, I beg your pardon. But don't get riled, because I didn't mean any harm."

"All right. Look here, Arthur; you're rather an ass in some ways, but you are a gentleman and have a kind heart and an honourable mind. Now take warning by a frightful example. You drop all this d——d affectation of being a rake, and all that side those babies at the club put on. You'll drop a lot of cash and get jolly little return. If you want to enjoy yourself, take old Carl Corsar's advice—find a good thing and keep it to yourself. Carl always knew what he was about, and made a good thing of it. I've tried at the same fences and arrived in the ditch. Now let's drop the subject. If you'll wait till I've changed, we'll go together to the Deanery."

"Oh? All right. I say, there's a girl there——"

"There are several girls there. A large assortment kept in stock, dear boy."

Arthur laughed.

"Yes. But there's an article I can confidently recommend."

"Which is that?"

"Tallish, black hair, left-hand corner."

"What's her name?"

"Well, I don't know that I am at liberty to tell."

"Do you know?"

"Er—not exactly," Arthur Raynham looked uncomfortable.

"Have you ever exchanged a word with her?"



"Well, no."

Sandy shrieked with laughter, as he hauled a stiff white shirt over his head.

"Do you mean to say you pay for a stall there to see the same burlesque week after week, and haven't got more by it than that? Would you like to know her name?"

"Yes, awfully. She looks a good sort—different from—some of them."

Sandy thought of Miss James, and said—"Yes—she's different from some of them. Well, her name is Miss Theo Morton, but I don't advise you to get gone on her."

"Why not?"

"Because there is another fellow there, whom you wouldn't like to run against, who would make very short work of you if you *did* get messing about after her."

"Who?"

"Don't tell anyone."

"No."

"Carl Corsar. That's his good thing which he keeps to himself."

"My goodness! What would the Dean say?"

"He's not likely to visit the Deanery."

"Fancy having one of one's own dons for a rival!"

"Fancy his having one of his own freshmen for a rival."

"Well, he is a lucky man, anyhow. He's such an infernally good-looking man, too! What a lark if we were to see him at the theatre."

"You won't. He doesn't go. Knows better than that."

"What does he do?"

"Meets her somewhere afterwards."

"I say—is she a straight girl?"

"I know nothing to the contrary."

"Well, doesn't it seem a little funny for a man like Corsar to be knocking about with her? What's going to become of her? He can't marry her, of course, and it seems—"

"Marry! Well, Carl is not quite such a fool, if my estimate of him be correct. But you seem very anxious about her."

"Well, hang it, I am! She seems so different from the rest of the gang that you can't help it—it's almost as if she

were a girl one knew—a lady I mean.” Extraordinary muddle as thy moral code is, Arthur, there are streaks of splendour through its fog, such as dawn not on the mere bestial who have been thy tutors and companions!

“Rot! As a wife for a man like that, a girl like that is absurdly unsuitable. A vacation lark is one thing, an irremediable life-long mistake, always hampering, always dragging down, is another. That’s what marriage would mean under such circumstances. It’s perfectly shocking to contemplate.”

Arthur was, of course, a little dazzled by the unscrupulous doctrine of his more brilliant senior, and of course a little ashamed of having shown a glimmer of a tendency towards

“Fair passions and bountiful pities  
And loves without stain”

That was not *Junior Imberbis* form at all. And they went to the theatre together.

And we will leave them, and see whether Sandy’s estimate of Carl’s disposition really was correct.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### RATHER IDYLIC.

ONE of those warm afternoons, in the end of June or beginning of July, when London looks best and feels worst, when the docks, the canals, the river, the glue, tallow, and leather trade, the slums and Covent Garden, combined with the assistance of a hot sun to produce the most pernicious and damnable smells that ever a city gasped faintly forth in the summer stillness, when the parks were green and gay with trees and flowers, when young people went round the Serpentine in the long late evenings to make love, and watch children sailing boats, and envy dripping, shaking, glittering dogs their free plunge and freer shake, when flannel-clad sun-tanned gentlemen played flannel-clad sun-tanned players at Lords', and combined together to play flannel-clad sun-tanned Australians at Kennington Oval, when 'bus drivers and conductors wore white hats and flowers in their button-holes, in fact, the season of which the poet sings:—

“Beneath the baneful star of Sirius,  
When the postmen slower jog,  
When the ox becomes delirious,  
And the muzzle decks the dog,”

Mr. Carl Corsar, M.A., nicely dressed in cool blue serge, with a straw hat (pepper and salt, old Audit Boat Club ribbon) a flower in his button-hole, and a cigar in his mouth, walked up the steps of the National Gallery, in Trafalgar Square, glanced at the clock of St. Martin's Church, then marking three, glanced at the magnificent prospect which is terminated by the clock tower of Westminster glittering in the misty sunshine, and waited. The custodian inside the door glanced

carelessly at Carl standing between two pillars and leaning on the rail, and took no further notice of him. He had seen far too many persons of both sexes come up those steps and wait to take any interest in Carl the Nth.

Carl waited. Five minutes passed. "Wonder why women *never* can be punctual?" he murmured. Three more minutes passed. Then a graceful form in one of those much bestriped sateens in delicately blended colours which were fashionable for summer wear at the time, appeared on the steps. He threw away his cigar, advanced to meet the form, took off his hat and said—

"Well, Jenny! Allow me to call your attention to the clock."

"I'm very sorry, dear, but it really was not my fault." A curious fact. They are always a few minutes late, are always sorry, and it never is their fault.

"All right. You are here, and that's the main thing. Now, where would you like to go? I'm ready and willing to take my young woman for an 'outing' somewhere," laughed he as they went down the steps, "where shall it be?"

"Let's go into St. James's Park. It's nice there, and we can sit down if we are tired."

"And then go up Regent Street, look at such shop windows as seem inviting, and finish by feeding somewhere?"

"That will do. Whatever you like, Carl. Look at my new gloves!"

"Old gold, eh? What is it, silk, yes. Very nice. Hope it will be long before they 'bust.' You certainly have a talent for getting things that suit you."

And they walked along Pall Mall, objects of admiration and envy to many a weary old club-haunter, so clean, and strong, and young, and handsome, and happy they both looked.

"Don't you sometimes think you're wasting your time awfully, Carl, loafing about with me instead of doing your work?"

"No, I don't. Shouldn't do it if I did. The time will come soon enough when I shall have to go back to the shop again. So let's just waste as much time as we can.



These jolly sunlit wasted days will count some time to us as the best days in our life to look back to."

"There are one or two things I want to ask you about, Carl—consult you, that is."

"Consult away. I have constituted myself your sole guardian, my pleasing orphan. Regard me in the light of the Court of Chancery, whose function it is to take care of infants. You are the infant. Fire away."

"Well, I don't think I can live any longer at old Arnold's."

"Oh. Why not?"

"James—his daughter, you know—"

"I know. Well? By the way, don't call her James. It's ridiculous."

"Has been awfully nasty to me. Always is now. And her brother pesters me a great deal. Makes jokes at me I don't like, and keeps asking me to let him take me out."

"The devil he does! Anything else?"

"Only it's an awful way off, and I'm not happy there. And you won't be angry, Carl, or go and do something rash?"

"I don't know about not being angry, but I won't do anything rash."

"They say nasty things about you and me. At least she and her brother do. Of course he's an awful cad."

"Of course he is."

"And what he says or thinks doesn't matter."

"Of course it doesn't."

"And I don't think she's a—good girl, you know. Do you understand?"

"I do." And Carl pondered silently as they went down the steps by the Duke of York's Column. "Look here, Infant," he said at last, "you are quite right. I'll find a proper place for you to live in, and you shall leave at once, and cut yourself adrift from them for ever. I ought to have thought of that myself. I'll tell you another thing you must be cut adrift from too."

"What?"

"That pestilent den of iniquity called the Deanery Theatre."

"Oh, Carl! Why?"

"I'll tell you why, and I think you'll agree with me. Look here. I'm older than you, and know a jolly lot more about

these things than you do, and what I say is this. There is not a woman there who is fit society for you, and very few men. You know what they are in that chorus—ignorant, jealous, greedy, spiteful, and possessing the taste and morality of animals.”

“But aren’t people out of the theatre like that sometimes?”

“True. But you don’t get that *ad nauseam* and nothing else outside, and you are not bound to associate with it.”

“But if they are all that, I needn’t be?”

“Look here. I don’t care if you were the Madonna. As sure as ‘making up’ will spoil your skin, so will that life harden, discolour, and slowly corrupt your spiritual complexion. And I won’t have it. You are worth too much now to be allowed to depreciate that way. It isn’t as if you were a great star, who can do as she likes. They can be ornaments to art and to society, and people can admire as well as respect them. All that you can understand, if you will only think it over. Another thing. Do you think I am going to see my Infant exposing her person to the admiration of young fools from Sandhurst and shop-counters and old beasts from—well, from the nearest churchyard, if they had their rights, who sit and snigger in the stalls, and have a right to, because they have paid to see the show? Not much. The Court of Chancery is very easy-going in the matter of infant freedom and behaviour, but it draws the line at that. Don’t you know that old actors always carefully keep their female children as far from the theatre as possible?”

“But I thought it was only pious people who disapproved of the theatre?”

“I don’t disapprove of it a bit. I like it. But I don’t like your belonging to it. All that about the theatre being a school of morals, an instructor, and a means of elevating the masses, is utter bosh. The paying part of the masses don’t want to be elevated. They want to have their senses tickled, their nerves stimulated, and their flesh made to creep. They want to cry at maudlin agonies, to laugh at coarse jokes, to be harrowed by explosions, and to sympathise with convicts. That’s what the *bourgeoisie* want. The aristocracy want to see as many women as possible as much undressed as possible. A few eccentric people of culture—mostly objects of derision—want to see Shakespeare, and all that sort of thing. I

know I generally would rather see burlesques and explosion-plays myself, though I don't care much about theatres now, and don't mind confessing it. But that doesn't make it good taste. But then I only do it as a sort of holiday, like reading a trashy novel to compose my mind, after looking over reams of insane answers to examination papers. So you'll leave that show, and with it the society of Miss James and all her like. You will cease to listen to that abandoned sewer-mouthed, foul-minded stage-manager, Mr. Jemmy Symes, who looks on you girls as a conjuror does on a well-worn bag of tricks or a troupe of performing dogs. You will no longer kneel in front of the fire curling your hair, while a pair of tights are hung out to dry on the back of a chair, and Miss James is calling her father a damned old fool on the stairs—as I heard her do once, when she didn't know I was there. See?"

"Very well. If I must I must, I suppose. You know I will do anything you tell me. But there is one person I don't want to drop, Carl."

"Well?"

"That's Sadie Levy. She has been kinder to me than anybody in the world, except, of course, you. I don't know—I'm afraid to think what would have become of me in London if it hadn't been for her."

"My poor Infant! But nobody asks you to give her up. I think she's a very good sort. What's she doing?"

"Oh, she's at the old place. I saw her yesterday. She's awfully down about Maxwell—Mr. Maxwell, I mean."

"What about him? He's been very mysterious lately. I don't know the least what he's up to, or even where he is."

"Don't you? Then I'll tell you. He used to take Sadie out, and so on, till she got awfully fond of him, a jolly sight too fond of him, and now he's gone and taken up with another girl. That's all."

"Down at Watermouth? Yes. I expect he's engaged to her. It began to look like it when I was there."

"No; I mean a girl in London, who's not fit to button Sadie's boots."

"The devil he has! What, *another* girl? Who?"

"Minnie James. I found it out from old Arnold. He was in an awful way, half crying and half cracked, and said his daughter had disgraced him and gone off with some swell.

You see he was proud of her, goodness knows why. Well, he is her father, you know. I knew who it was because I saw them often go away from the theatre together."

"H'm. Well, the conviction is forcing itself on me that somebody ought to kick that young man. Not that I pity Miss James much. She knows which side her bread is buttered well enough, and jammed and anchovied as well. It's the other two I'm thinking of. How can he be such a fool? Fancy leaving what he had for the sake of what he has, if your account be correct."

"It's all wrong somehow, isn't it? Do you know I think men are rather a bad lot, taken altogether, almost as bad as women. They talk about women being treacherous, and all that, but they are just the same. Besides, it doesn't seem to make the same difference to them that it does to women."

"My dear child, men *are* a bad lot. They are mostly beasts. They will talk in a very pleasant and proper way to you, and then they will show your poor little letters to them to each other and joke about them, and chaff each other, and discuss you in a way that a dealer discusses a horse. That's partly why I want to get you out of all that hell on wheels you are getting mixed in."

"Well, now let's talk of something pleasanter. Here's a nice curved bench. We'll sit down. Now tell me all about yourself."

"You know most things about me, I think, don't you?"

Jenny looked across the St. James's Park pond at the ducks, and bored holes in the gravel with her sunshade. Then she said—

"You never told me what your people were like."

"For an excellent reason; I haven't got any."

"Are you an orphan too?"

"Well, next thing to it. I have a father whom I hardly ever see, who never was any good to me, and who is, between you and me, rather a shady old party. I have no secrets from you, Jenny, but I don't tell anybody else this. I don't think I need go into details."

"I'm sorry I spoke now."

"All right, Infant. Anything else you want to know?"

"There's a great deal I want to know. Carl, do you know I'm awfully ignorant?"



"Are you?"

"Of course I am. How could I be anything else? You know I never had any proper education, and have just picked up a few things anyhow. I come across lots of things in books I don't understand, and then I don't like to ask you, because it would only show you what a dreadfully silly useless sort of infant you've got hold of, and you would laugh at me; and that hurts, you know."

"I shouldn't laugh at you. Just you tell me whatever you want to know, and I'll do my best to help you."

"I can't think what you can see in me to care about at all."

"Mere eccentricity on my part. Is that one of the things you want to know?"

"You silly old Court of Chancery! No. It's enough for me to know that you *do* care, that you have cared, and been kinder to me than anybody else in the world, ever since I was a child."

"I don't know that anyone else would look on my conduct in that light."

"I don't care what other people think. Well then, Carl, will you get proper things for me to read, to improve my mind, and so on, and help me when I can't help myself? Not too dry, you know; but I want to be able to talk to you about things you can be interested in, and not like an ignorant infant, you know."

"All right. It'll be a nice occupation for you when I'm down at Fenchester."

"And me here by myself? Oh, Carl; don't leave me alone."

"Don't be an unreasonable infant. I can't do my work, for which I get my money, unless I'm there; and I can't be there and here at the same time; but I'll often come and see you and 'take you out,' as the phrase is."

"How often?"

"As often as I can. You may possibly not believe it, but I shall miss you quite as much as you will miss me. I think you can trust me by this time not to forget you."

"Well, I suppose I can. But Carl, you know you *did* forget me once. It's no use your pretending you didn't."

"Let's talk about something else."

"Where am I to live, Carl?"

"When can you get away from the place in Camberwell?"

"Oh, whenever I like, I suppose."

"Well, let's think it over. Would you like to come out with me and hunt for an abode? Might be rather fun, I should think."

"It would look rather funny, wouldn't it?"

"How do you mean?"

"I mean they'd wonder what I was to you."

"Who would?"

"Oh, lodging people, and so on."

"Let 'em wonder. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"

"Yes. That's all very well for you. You're a man."

"Well, let's see. Can't I be your brother?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Well, uncle, grandfather, husband, if you like."

"Oh Carl! Why can't you really be my husband?"

"By Jove! There's an idea. Let's look at it in all its aspects."

"You see, Carl, I believe, at least, I know you love me, because you say so; and of course I'll do anything in the world you want, if you tell me, whether I like it or not; but it is awkward rather for a girl. You see I haven't got my mother or anybody, and I never learnt the right thing to do, and just have to behave by guess work and chance it. I know I'm not expressing what I mean much. I don't much care about people's opinions; in fact, I don't suppose there *are* many people who trouble their heads about what I do, and I'm only a sort of infant, as you say, and I am utterly and entirely yours, to do what you like with. You will be kind to me, Carl, won't you?"

Carl was indescribably touched by this rather confused appeal to his mercy, through which he saw clearly enough the meaning struggling out between the lines. All he said was—

"All right, Infant. Give the Court time to think it over. Chancery proceedings are dilatory, you know; but they are Equitable. Let's get up and walk now."

And they walked out through the gates of St. James's Palace, up St. James's Street, along Piccadilly, and up the right-hand side of Regent Street slowly, looking at the passers, who were the extraordinary assortment of humans

generally to be found there between four and five on a summer afternoon, at the photographs, the bonnets, the fans, the boots, gloves, carpets, armchairs, silk hangings, jewellery and other attractions of that fascinating street. And Carl bought Jenny a pair of gloves—a pair of long, black Swedish gloves, such as had long been the object of her envy. And they cost a whole five shillings, and Carl was reproved for extravagance, and replied “Bosh,” and Jenny said she didn’t believe he knew the proper price of anything, or the difference between sateen and brown holland, or between kilting and box-pleats ; and Carl admitted his ignorance, and a lecture with demonstrations was given by Jenny before a window in Oxford Street.

In fact the Court of Chancery condescended to unbend. No one would have recognised the Fellow of Audit, the contributor to the *Microscopical Journal*, the lecturer and tutor of youth, in this man in a straw hat, wandering carelessly with Jenny through London, and treating all existence as a vast joke. Once he met one of his pupils—a freshman—who “capped” him gravely and passed on, and marvelled, and acquired new ideas as to the vacation habits of Dons. Carl only laughed and said—

“Oh Lord ! I might have known that would happen. I shall be at his mercy now.”

“What do you mean ?”

“That was one of my pups who capped us just now. He will have found out that I am merely human ; that I gallivant around town with an attractive infant, whose parcels I carry. In short, his reverence for me will be gone. He won’t dare chaff me, but he’ll *feel* chaff, and I shall feel that he feels it, and break into an undignified grin. Ah well ! *Dum vivimus vivamus !*”

“What’s that ?”

“If we *are* to be babies, let’s do it thoroughly. Hullo, look there !” added Carl, in a graver voice. A cab passed by, containing Sandy Maxwell and Miss Minnie James.

“He must have seen me,” said Carl, “or he wouldn’t have looked so elaborately the other way.”

“You see I was right.”

“Yes. Poor devil ! I am more sorry than I can express, although he makes me angry too, that he should have turned

out such a man. I always hoped he'd make a splendid fellow. He could have if he'd tried. That's the worst of it."

"You liked him very much?"

"I like him still, Jenny. If not, I shouldn't be angry, or sorry. It isn't his knocking about with that woman I mind. That's nothing. Most men do that, but it's the way he is treating the other girls. It's not quite on the platform. There's a certain kind of platform, I mean a certain kind of understanding, between gentlemen, however loose their morals, which, I am afraid, he doesn't quite understand."

"Perhaps he has some excuse you don't know of. Perhaps the other girl's thrown him over, or he thinks so."

"We shall see. Jenny, where shall we dine?"

"Oh, I don't know, some small and quiet place."

"Very well."

And they went to "some small and quiet place" and had a small and quiet dinner, washed down with a bottle of Rudesheimer and a little coffee. After the meal, while they were staring pensively at one another across the coffee cups, Carl said—

"The court has taken time to consider the question, and is now ready to give an opinion. Jenny, you and I will proceed to get married."

"Oh, Carl! Do you mean it?"

"I do. Of course people like you and me know that marriage ceremonies are mostly different forms of verbal bosh; but they do give, I believe, though I'm not certain, a few legal advantages—though they're nothing compared to the possible disadvantages conferred by law upon married persons. And it would give you a certain satisfaction, I know, to have a document which the vulgar call 'Lines'—awful lines they are on some people. So you and I will get married in the shortest and cheapest method consistent with the requirements of the law."

"Yes, Carl," said Jenny submissively, with a tremor of great gladness and gratitude, "for he needn't have," she thought; "he knows I would be his slave or his pet till he was tired of me if he wanted it."

Carl did not seem himself in this heroic light, and simply thought he was taking the most reasonable course under the



circumstances. But a man who is a chivalrous gentleman is seldom actively conscious of the fact.

"But you must wait a little. You must wait, in fact, till the new statutes for the universities begin to act. You must know that the pious founders of fellowships attached the absurd condition that Fellows were not to marry. They may get drunk, lead a profligate life, gamble, even murder, I fancy, without losing their fellowship. But they draw the line at marriage. I suppose the founders thought they were doing men a kindness and fencing them round from a prevalent danger by the surest means they could, an appeal to their self-interest. Well, a few revolutionary Royal Commissioners have upset that arrangement, and in a few months I shall be free. It's all very silly, of course, but it is so. See?"

"Yes. It seems hardly true yet, Carl, that I am really to be your wife and be with you always."

"Always. We've neither of us any people to be consulted, so we can do just whatever we like as to arranging our affairs."

"And will you never get tired of me?"

"Get tired of you, my Infant, whom I've known since she was a child? No. I think not. But it will be awfully funny at first to have one's coffee made by some one else. By Jove! I've made my own coffee now for eleven years! Look here, Jenny, I must warn you of a few of my domestic peculiarities while there is time. In the first place, I always smoke everywhere."

"I don't mind that."

"I keep a white rat called Juliet, to which I am deeply attached."

"I keep a black cat called Jael that I couldn't part with."

"That's awkward. By the way, why Jael?"

"Because she's so fond of sticking her nails into people."

"Well, then, I hate having things put away tidy in any room I work in. I like my hat and stick, and ink and paper, and pens and newspapers and microscope all on the table."

"Well, you must have a room of your own to do what you like in, and I won't come in unless I'm asked."

"Let's pay and go. Well, you think we'll do?"

"I think! Oh, Carl, I'm too happy to tell you what I think. But I must go to the theatre now."

"No you don't. You'll never go on that stage again."

"But I shall forfeit my salary."

"D—— your salary. I beg your pardon. I mean, that objection is unimportant. Let's go for a walk."

"Where?"

"Don't care. Where you like. I say, have you ever seen a play of Shakespeare's?"

"No, never."

"Neither have I. Let's go and see how we like it. I'm sick of comic operas. I'm turning into a different sort of man, I think."

And they went to see a play of Shakespeare's, the *Merchant of Venice*, to wit, in which the part of the hero (a much-injured money-lender) was played by one of England's most striking and marvellous geniuses. And when they came out Carl said—

"I say, Shakespeare is good. I apologise for having ignorantly called him a bore. Now, *that's* the kind of thing that *would* elevate the masses if the masses were capable of elevation."

"But we are not the masses."

"Lord forbid! We are Carl and Jenny, a firm which shall not dissolve till the hearse trots round, eh?"

You see Carl was a greater fool than Sandy took him for, after all.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### FACILIS DESCENSUS.

THAT to Avernus is as easy a descent as anybody could wish to find. Some slide down, with slow acceleration. Others stalk unwillingly, with a backward glance from time to time, regretful but powerless. Some climb, many crawl down. Sandy jumped. Even Miklos was astonished at his reckless course. For Sandy exhausted his remaining capital, two or three hundred pounds, in three weeks, the principal persons profiting by this expenditure being keepers of restaurants and hotels, livery-stables, lessees of theatres, railway companies, and Miss Minnie James.

Desperation spurred behind and ruin yawned in front. At last the crisis arrived, the last day which Sandy ever spent of many which had been, of license, waste, and riot; the end of the most stupendous "scoop," as he remarked, he had ever been on—the last day of his youth, perhaps. For he was young after all, then. Less so than he was a month before, more so than he was a day after. His argument was this, to any friendly expostulation: "Look here, my boy, I'm going to smash. I know it well. But I mean to have as much fun out of the process as I can, and then take smiling whatever comes. I mean to have a splendid ruin like Rome, not a miserable corrosion and slow stagnation like Spain. Let me slide; I'm half-cracked, you think, but I'm not played out yet. I may be a fool, but I'm not the kind of fool who funks things. If I go on the bend it shall be one that shall fill the annals and found the traditions of *junior imberbis* yet in Eton jackets."

And to those youths he was a brilliant Lucifer, to be looked at with admiration and awe, this poor, reckless, passion-

guided, devil-ridden fellow with the great strong body and hopeless heart. How were they to know he dreamed at night feverishly of far-off little May—as a child with a kitten, over and over again, till he woke up shuddering and hiding his tears in the darkness? And the suave, satisfied, meaningless Madonna face of Miss Minnie looked placidly on at his ruin, and made a very good thing of it.

Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour! Hers were always soft—the same innocent, inquiring stare, that expressed so fully all the intolerable deal of nothing which that pretty head contained.

Sandy's last day of unfettered festivity began well. In the first place there was breakfast, and during that meal a confidential conversation with Miklos. This was at his lodging in the Adelphi, where Sandy at present lay. When Sandy breakfasted, being by himself, he took porridge first, then steak and onions, then a long pull, perhaps a quart, of lager-beer. No effeminate baby-rake he, with trembling limbs and appetiteless acid mouth. And he consumed these light refreshments at ten o'clock in a pair of flannel trousers and a striped jersey. He then did some practice with a pair of heavy Indian clubs. Then he sat down with a pipe while Miklos cleared away.

"She'll turn up in the afternoon, I expect, Miklos. She said she was going to some infernal ball in Pentonville last night; that will make her late. Did she go?"

"Yes."

"It was more out of curiosity than because I cared that I asked you to find out. Did she pick up with any fellow there?"

"She danced with a good many, and drank with a good many."

"Naturally. *Bourgeois*?"

"*Bohêmes*."

"Get drunk?"

"Not very."

"Spoon anybody? Excessively, I mean."

"Nothing important."

"Wish she had. It would give me some excuse for a row. As it is I shall have to tell her the brutal truth. Miklos, we're going to stop all this rot. The end has arrived. We've



got to go out and see what we can do for a living now. You are no longer my servant. I can't keep you."

"I will cease to be your servant. I will keep myself. We will say I am your friend, if you will allow that."

"By Jove, we will say it, and mean it, too. Yes, we'll finish to-day. Tell the brougham to come round as usual after dinner, to take her to the theatre."

"We'll see the rats leave the ship now, I think."

"That'll do Miklos. *Vivent les gueux!*"

In the afternoon a hansom drove up with Miss James's fair halo, pale face, and great guileless eyes, visible in the dark-blue background of the "Forder." She liked Forders because they had looking-glasses in them, convenient for people who carry powder-puffs in small plush bags. Sandy watched the tall, slender, well-drilled *poseuse* from his window on the first floor, as she got out and paid the cabman, who touched his hat and thanked her.

"She's a very fine piece of human anatomy, anyhow," he muttered; "as such very creditable. Wouldn't make a bad waxwork either. Hullo, Minnie, what did you give the cabby? He seemed awfully grateful."

"I gave him two shillings."

"Where from, Camberwell?"

"Camberwell, no! From the theatre."

"Rather under half the distance you could go for a shilling. Well, if you like to chuck your money away on the acquisition of popularity among cabmen, I can't object."

"I always give that."

"Which settles the question for ever, of course. What have you been doing?"

"Call at one. Let's have a drink. I'm awfully thirsty."

"Here is some hock, will you have some of that?"

"Oh, I don't care for that; there's no taste in it. Let's have a brandy and split."

"Very well. Though I like your cheek in saying Rüdesheimer has no taste."

"I suppose you mean it's me that has no taste?"

"Well, it looks like it, rather."

"I don't know how it is, but I don't care for anything to-day, except brandy and soda."

"Don't you care for me?"

"Oh, of course I do; that's different. Oh, I say, Sandy, I don't get treasury till to-morrow. Could you give me half a quid? I *must* get some things in Sidney Alley this afternoon."

"Oh?"

"Yes, really."

"Well, I'll see."

"Can't you give it me now?"

"Are you in a great hurry?"

"Well, I may as well get it done. I sha'n't leave you for long. A cab there and a cab back—oh, half an hour, perhaps."

"Do you never walk anywhere? It would take you barely ten minutes to walk from here, and the pavement is dry."

"I hate walking. Besides, it's so hot."

"Very well, here you are—fire away! Miklos!"

"Yes, sir."

"Get a cab—and," he added in a tongue not comprehensible to Miss James, "see where she goes and what she does; write it down, and give it me as a note from some one when you come back."

Meanwhile Miss James was going downstairs. Sandy leant back in an armchair, smoked his pipe, and waited, chuckling over a French comic paper. In the course of time—not half an hour, more like an hour and a half—Miss James returned, saying—

"Have I been long?"

"Not at all. Have you got all you want now?"

"Yes, thanks."

Enter Miklos gravely with a note.

Miklos very much admired Sandy's cynical absence of any kind of confidence in or respect for the fair Minnie. That was just the way, Miklos thought, after long experience, "they" should be treated. Besides, both he and Sandy took a childlike delight in discovering plots, laying traps, and generally playing at being detectives. That amused them, and was certainly productive of curious discoveries, seldom calculated to increase their respect for humanity at large.

Miklos's note ran thus:—

"She did not go to Sidney Alley. She drove to the Café Monico, and met Mr. ——" (mentioning one of the youngest and greenest of Sandy's *junior imberbis* acquaintance). "I

did not hear what she said. She spent no money. He paid for both cabs. They had a pint-bottle of champagne. They made an appointment (as she got into the cab, I heard it) for supper at Greco's to-night. She will take him from the theatre in her brougham at half-past eleven."

Sandy smiled. "*Her* brougham, too!" he muttered.

"What?"

"Nothing, my dear. Where would you like to have supper to-night after the show?"

"Do you know, I can't see you to-night after the show. You don't mind, do you? Because I promised to go home to-night, and my brother's going to take me to a ball. It's his bicycle club that are giving the ball at the Horns at Kennington."

"Oh."

"But I'll come where you like to-morrow night after the show, I promise you!"

"Oh, *will* you," thought Sandy.

"Then you won't want my brougham to-night, will you? It will look better, you know, if you go home in a cab. A private carriage might give rise to disagreeable questions or remarks."

"Oh, bother questions! Of course I want it. It doesn't matter what they say. Besides, as if they didn't know! Or cared if they did."

"Well, Minnie, I assure you, you won't go out with me to-morrow night, or, for the matter of that, any more nights."

"Why not?"

The infantile blue eyes stared in amaze.

"Because I'm going to jack-up the whole thing. I've spent all my— Plunged, scattered, bust, broke, gone under! Understand?"

"Can't you get any more money? Won't your governor stump up?"

"Haven't got a governor, or any one to stump up for me."

"Can't you borrow?"

"No securities. Don't suppose there's anything here worth pledging either—except, of course, your affection—but that is far beyond all money valuation, of course."

"What do you mean? You ought to have told me before you were going to smash. It's not fair on me."

"Oh? Why?"

"Why? Why, of course! Don't you see that you have made me look so silly; everybody knew that I was going about with you, and now you turn out to be a d——d outsider after all, and they'll laugh at me. Regular caddish I call it. And so I say so to your face! I never heard of such a thing. I always thought you were a gentleman."

"Did you? I never told you so. But what made you think that?"

"I heard you had lots of money. Two or three of my lady-friends said so. They had it from fellows you knew."

"And who thought they knew me, eh? Well, I'm not responsible for the opinions of your lady-friends or those of the fellows I knew."

"And what's to become of me, I'd like to know?"

"So would I. I'm really curious about that. I suppose you are really under the impression that you are an injured individual?"

"I shouldn't wonder if I could bring an action against you!"

"Oh! What for?"

"Deceiving me, and damages."

"What have I damaged?"

"Why, my reputation for one thing."

"You saved me the pain of doing that some time ago."

"Well, you're a beastly cad, that's what you are, and I don't care who hears me say it. Regular bilker."

The Madonna face was getting rather red.

"Now look here. You have had your say, and said it pretty freely. Now hear mine. You say I have injured you. Very good. I will adopt your charming candour and tell you a few little details that may soothe. In the first place, you have had from me, in about three weeks, very nearly two hundred and fifty pounds in dress, food, wine, carriages, various luxuries, and hard cash. That doesn't sound like an injury. I don't complain. Of course, you had it of my free will. Secondly, I never represented myself as a capitalist. Thirdly, you gave me to understand that what you cared about was me personally, not what you could get out of me. Such an assurance was, of course, very flattering—so flattering that I ventured to doubt it; but I never lacerated



those sensitive feelings of yours by expressing a doubt. Fourthly, you stated, with strong expressions approaching oaths, that you never spoke to any man but me, much less went out with them. That asseveration you backed up by having appointments on the sly with—let me see, here's the memorandum. 'June 27th; Charlie Maitland, 4 p.m., Vigo Street Post-office.' That was the day I had neuralgia, as you were aware. With him you proceeded to dine at the Holborn. 'July 2nd; Stanny Stuart, of the —th Lancers. Met you outside the theatre after the show. Rule's, Maiden Lane.' Yes, that was when I went out to dinner with some men, and left you to do what you liked with the brougham. This afternoon you met —— at the Monico, and had a pint of fizz, while I was supposed to be under the impression you were buying hooks and eyes and things in Sidney Alley. You are to go with him to Greco's to-night. Go; bless you both! Now I should have kept these facts for my own private edification, if you hadn't had the ghastly cheek to abuse me as an injurer of innocence, and general deceiver—in fact, as you gracefully put it, a bilker. Now don't you think you had better look at it in a new light? You've had lots out of me, and you have 'hedged' so skilfully that you have lots more to fall back upon—fellows much greener than me. Supposing I were to tell these little episodes to young —— before he met you to-night? Never mind, I'm not going to. Now it's all up, do you see?"

Miss James was petrified into submission.

"I say, Sandy, stand me another cab-fare, just to show there's no malice. You've given back as good as you've got. By ——, you're the best of the lot, after all! You're a man, and not like these babies. I like a man."

"Yes, my dear. I know that."

"And I hope you'll speak to me again, and things will come round all right, and then we'll have some more jolly times—and by Jingo, we'll make the other fellows pay for it!"

"Thank you. Next time you see me, I'll see whether you will condescend to recognise me. Good-bye, Minnie. You see we're both better friends now we know each other."

"Good-bye, Sandy. I'm sorry we had a row."

"People who come off second-best generally are."

"Ah! don't go on like that. I'm not such a bad sort."

There, I won't take that cab-fare. And I'll stand you a drink when I get the chance."

"Thanks. I'll take it."

"Give me a kiss, Sandy!"

"Won't it spoil the make-up?"

"Oh, no," said Minnie, unconscious of sarcasm.

"All right."

And that epoch in Sandy's life was over.

## CHAPTER XX.

MR. GEORGE CLINCH.

SANDY sat alone in his window staring at the dim sunlit masses of dreary buildings on the other side of the Thames; the muddy brown or Indian red of the barge-sails, the lingering, laden, petroleum vessels with their topheavy-looking stacks of green casks with grey ends, and the fussy, dirty, vulgar-looking passenger steamers. Away on the left was Waterloo Bridge with Somerset House, brilliant white, with the aërial dimness of a summer day behind, half veiling St. Paul's dome in grey. He could just read "Oopack" in large letters on the top of a 'bus as it crossed the bridge, and wondered aimlessly who, where, or what "Oopack" was. Then he looked at the lion on the top of the brewery, and thought what good practice one could make at it with a rifle from the window. And then his eyes travelled by way of dreary brown Hungerford Bridge, with its white smoke-puffs, back to his own situation, and he wondered if anybody had ever made such a hopeless fool of himself before, and whether—

"this land was a white man's  
And was generally things on the square?"

Here was his future spoilt, his prospects of living the leisurely, intelligent life of a gentleman blasted, his chance of a charming girl for a wife gone, himself reduced to "hard-upness," dissipation, folly, and despair—by whose fault? It did not occur to him to blame himself, beyond admitting that he had taken things rather too easily, perhaps, but his whole wrath came down on that one peculiar and unaccountable presence which had hovered over him like a hawk, and darkened his atmosphere like a blight—Cyrus Shute.

The last three mad weeks were gone like a bad dream, and Sandy again felt what he felt when he made good resolutions and determined to be Dictator of an American State.

"I've still brains, and pluck, and health and strength," he thought, "and by Jove I'll score off that fellow yet!" That fellow being naturally, Cyrus Shute.

At this period of his reflections a knock came at the door, and Miklos announced "Mr. Corsar!"

Carl walked in as if he had parted from Sandy two hours before, with his straw hat on a little forward over the eyes, and a cigar in his mouth.

"Hullo, Sandy. Been looking for you."

"Sit down. I'm awfully glad to see you."

"Look here, I hear a lot of funny things about you. I don't want to misjudge you, but what I want to know is what this all means? Eh?"

"I don't beat about the bush with you. It means this. In the first place I've been kicked out down there at Watermouth, and told I can't have—what I principally wanted down there. In the second place I've got no money. At least, not enough to last long?"

"What are you going to do?"

"Going to do without 'em."

"Don't be an ass. What *are* you going to do?"

"Well, we'll talk that over later. So you see now I'm not quite so bad as you were given to understand?"

"Yes. I see what you mean. But you are not quite on the platform yet."

"What's the matter now?"

"How about Sadie Levy?"

"By Jove! I'm awfully sorry. I utterly forgot her existence."

"She didn't forget yours."

"What a brute she must think me! Shall I go and see her?"

"No. What good are you ever likely to do her? She's got over the preliminary shock of finding out that you were usually in a state of profound and unique attachment to about three girls at once, and now she's had her idol knocked down, it isn't much good your presenting her with the collected fragments in a dust-pan. I fancy you'd better leave her alone."



"Very well ; I will. Now that'll do for the sarcastic part. I admit I deserve it, but you will be the first to see that when a man's down it's not necessary to come and jump on him."

"My dear idiot, I came to see if I could pick him up. Now let's talk business. Why this sudden start from down there? What brought on the crisis?"

"That infernal blank who calls himself Colonel Shute went and jawed to John Raynham about me. Don't know what he said—half truth, half lies I suppose—but the critical part was that he mixed up *her* in the story somehow. The beggar has the blank *blank* cheek to take an interest in her himself."

"Oh ; you know that man won't do at all. Can't be tolerated. I've no reason to tolerate him. If I found him in some sequestered territory of his gay native land, where inquests are rare—I'd—tell him so."

"Look here, let's worry this out. What do you know about him?"

"Meaning, what do I know against him? Well, strictly speaking, nothing. Except that he looks like a marked card."

"Well, what do you suspect? Can't we light metaphoric fireworks under his bed somehow? Hang it, we've got as much brains as he has, I hope."

"I generally suppose he's an adventurer, and up to some game. So do you. What next?"

"What's he up to, and who is he, eh? How shall we get at this? You'd like to see him up the tallest possible tree."

"And riding on the sharpest-edged rail. Of course. So far our unanimity is perfect. I say, are those confidential inquiry chaps any good, do you think?"

"People, and books, say all sorts of contradictory things about them. Some attribute to them superhuman subtlety. Some say they simply absorb fool's money and never find out anything till everyone else knows it. Suppose they are just good, bad, and indifferent, like other people."

"Think it's worth trying?"

"Arrow shot into the dark. You see we might light on a good man, and we might light on a duffer or a fraud."

"Suppose we interview one, and chance it? Can't hurt us. We can always drop it if it isn't good enough."

"And it may be amusing, and may be a success. But, my dear boy, how about exes?"

"Oh, I'll see to that. Now then, is it settled we try this game?"

"Yes, if you like; I'm on. You can use me to fetch and carry till my cash is all gone."

"Well, give me the paper. Which shall we attack? There are three here advertising."

"Read 'em out."

"Morley and Groves."

"Poor names those, rather. Go on."

"Anderson and Co."

"Dubious. Sounds Scotch, which is good; but I don't like Co. It looks like divided authority. Try again."

"George Clinch, late Crim. Inv. Dep."

"Clinch is good. 'Late Crim. Inv. Dep.,' is better."

"Perhaps he was sacked from it."

"Doesn't matter. May be a sharp man all the same."

"Shall it be Clinch?"

"Morley and Groves aren't it. Any duffer could be called Morley—or, for the matter of that, Groves. Here is one of my few remaining quids. Now, heads Clinch, tails Anderson."

"All right."

And Sandy's hand uncovered a sovereign on the table."

"Heads it is. Carl, where does Clinch hang out?"

"Craven Yard, Northumberland Avenue. Ten to five."

"It's now four. Come along. This may be a wild goose-chase or it may not, but we will divest our minds of all preconceived notions, either inspired by Inspector Bucket or Javert or any one else, and give the man a fair chance."

"Right."

And they rapidly covered the short distance from Adelphi Terrace to Craven Yard, which is a highly respectable yard, haunted chiefly by highly respectable money-lenders. There is a modest inconspicuousness about Craven Yard which suits people of retiring disposition, who do not feel anxious to flaunt the fact that they visit offices there. You can disappear into it from the general thoroughfare very readily, if you know it, and it is ten to one if you ever notice it if you do not know it. And yet it is pretty well known.

Mr. George Clinch was discovered in a den at the top of

one of the houses, by following a black hand and an upward-sloping inscription on the stairs. He sat in a very comfortable chair before a capacious knee-hole desk. On the desk were certain books. They were significant books, comprising *The Directory*, *The Peerage*, *The Army List*, *Bradshaw* (British and foreign) and like funds of useful information. The furniture consisted of a table, with more books, two inviting armchairs in conversational attitudes, in which Carl and Sandy were invited to sit, a small green safe, and a wash-stand disguised as a desk, with a little fern grown in a neat little red pot on the top. The windows were discreetly opaque. Besides the entrance door, a green baize door led to an anteroom.

Mr. George Clinch was a wiry, horsey-looking person, with a dash of the soldier about him; grey eyes which looked as if they always were laughing at some joke of their own, under thick, brown, perfectly horizontal eyebrows, a rather long brown face, brown moustache, short-cropped brown hair. Not bad-looking. Distinctly intelligent. Body strong-looking; quietly dressed in browns and greys. Age, perhaps forty—perhaps less. A beautiful collie dog lay beside him, and fraternised at once with Sandy.

“Well, sir?” said Mr. Clinch.

Carl, it had been arranged, was to talk, Sandy only putting in a remark when he thought proper. Carl told all the facts he knew concerning Colonel Cyrus Shute, with a few keen contemptuous touches and interpretations of his own. He omitted to mention where he had first seen Shute, viz. at his father’s lodgings. In the Watermouth incident he omitted for the present the names.

“You see, Mr. Clinch, as far as it goes it isn’t much of what I suppose you would call a case. But a case is just what we want you to help to get. It is unnecessary for me to tell a man of your experience what I mean when I say it’s pretty clear that this man is some sort of fraud, who has some sort of reason for wanting to get my friend here—and me—out of the way, so that he has the field to himself down among these country people, who are not naturally suspicious, and who are well off.”

“You want to find out all you can about him, don’t you, sir?”

"Just so. Can you give me any idea of the expenses of such an inquiry, supposing I put the dots on the i's and give the matter to you to deal with?"

"That would depend exactly upon the amount of trouble the inquiry gave. For instance, suppose you wanted to find if somebody was doing something at some place in—say Norfolk (to put a simple case); I should most likely have to go down there and see. Well, I should charge you the railway ticket, and, if I stayed the night, the inn, or lodging, or whatever it was, any trap I might hire, any squaring of any body, treatin' 'em to drink and such like. I should show you the bills, and ask for a certain percentage commission over and above. If I had to write letters and take cabs here in London, I should charge for the stamps, and cab-fares just the same. See? If you want a particular party constantly watched, I should charge so much a day, and tell you beforehand how much."

"Well, that's fair enough, certainly. Well then, will you lend a hand and see what you can do about this?"

"Very well, sir. Now let me ask a little more about this. What's this man's business now? Oh yes, 'Anna Maria' gold-mine. Well, that may be a swindle, or it may not. I should say it *was*, as a matter of opinion. Has he got any friends besides these friends of yours?"

"I don't know. I presume so."

"How did they get to know him?"

"Introduced. Club. Shute taken there by a friend, it appears."

"Yes. What club was that?"

"Idlers."

"Oh, was it? How long ago?"

"Early this summer, I understand."

"Know where the party is who introduced him?"

"Left the country, I heard."

"Where did he live before he left the country?"

"Jermyn Street."

"Know the house?"

"Yes. I know the house."

"Oh! Know the party's name, p'raps?"

"Mr. Clinch, I was wrong not to tell you my own name at first. We are in confidence here, on your honour?"

Mr. Clinch's eyes danced.



"Certainly, sir. You needn't go on. You'd rather not mention that party's name. I saw the likeness d'rectly I set eyes on you to somebody I remembered. Then when you spoke of that club it flashed on me."

Carl was rather astonished.

"Well then, Mr. Clinch, the matter is this: I feel no sort of respect or gratitude to that party for anything. He was brutal to his wife, and worse than useless to his son. Still I don't want to get him into a scrape. But as he is in America he's safe enough, I take it. Well, as a matter of fact, *he* introduced the man Shute to these other men, Raynhams."

"Yes, they dined at the Criterion first and went there after. I saw 'em."

Carl was rather more astonished.

"I hadn't any idea at the time who Shute was. I didn't know him by sight, but I do now. Should know his face anywhere. Can't disguise his accent either. It's curious. I was follerin' up the other party, in connection with a divorce case in the upper classes. He was suspected of something or other by a lady's husband—baronet he was, too. You'd know the name if I was to tell you. I was employed by the lady, too, to look after the baronet. Of course neither of 'em knew t'other was watchin'. And it came out the gentleman's suspicions was wrong, and the lady's was right. Gentleman had got mixed up with a lady at one of the theatres."

Here Clinch looked out of those merry eyes of his at Sandy, who grinned.

"Deanery theatre, I think it was——"

Sandy ceased to grin.

"Pretty little house. They've got another piece on since I was there. I used to go to the theatre to look after the honourable baronet. I don't often go to a theatre for pleasure, but I've been pretty often in the way of business. Well, there was a decree with costs against him. It's all over now. Like to see the lady's portrait—Deanery lady, I mean, sir?" (to Sandy).

"Certainly, if it isn't a breach of confidence."

"Oh, I know a gentleman when I see him. I know you'll keep it to yourself. Besides, you've seen it before, p'raps—may have got into the shop windows by now."

And Mr. Clinch opened the green safe and took out a cigar-box. Out of the cigar-box he took a cabinet photo and handed it to Sandy, still bending on him those mirthful eyes.

"Oh, d—— it!" exclaimed Sandy with a laugh, "this is too much." It was Miss Minnie James.

"Seen her before, sir, p'raps?"

"Well—yes, occasionally."

"Yes, I thought you had. Queer the way these things happen," remarked Clinch as he locked up the safe again.

"Now about this Mr. Shute. Where does he live?"

"Langham he always gives as an address."

"Say he is a rich man, don't they?"

"Papers do."

"Which papers?" Carl mentioned a couple of society weeklies.

"Yes. Well, it's easy enough to get that sort of stuff into that sort of paper, I believe. Well, I tell you what I'll do, if you like, sir. I'll see Shute and have a talk with him, at one of those places where you get American drinks, or somewhere, and see if I can reckon him up. I'll want to speculate in gold-mining, or I'll know some one who does, or something; see how we get on. I expect he keeps a portmanteau or two at the Langham on tick and lives somewhere else. Does he go to that club still?"

"I don't know," said Carl.

"I think he does," said Sandy. "Waller Raynham takes him there. Shouldn't wonder if Waller put him up. There would be a row probably then, because I fancy some of the Idlers have knocked about the world a good deal more than Waller, and know a tiger when they see him."

"Well, the long and the short of it is, Mr. Clinch," said Carl, "that we want to reckon up this man, if possible, with a view to opening the eyes of these friends of ours, and preventing some possible fraud or catastrophe in that family."

"Very good, sir. Do you live in London?"

"I do just at present, but I am generally at Fenchester. I do some teaching in the university there. Here's my address."

And Carl pencilled a lodging in one of the streets off the Strand on a card bearing on it, "Carl Corsar, *Aud. Coll., Fen.*"

"Thank you, sir."

"It's about your closing time, Mr. Clinch, isn't it?"

"Yes. Five o'clock I get out."

"Come and have something with us."

"Well, I don't mind if I do."

And Mr. Clinch put on his hat, took up his stick, locked up everything lockable, put bits of paper and hairs between the edges of drawers, so that they would fall noiselessly if any one attempted to open them, and so betray the attempt on subsequent examination, and they all went downstairs, followed by the now highly excited collie.

"Shall we go to the Grand?" said Sandy.'

"No, sir. Too many Americans go there. Shute might be there and see me with you, and that'd never do. You come with me. There's a very nice little place here, where I sometimes go."

And they went into the private bar of a small public-house in Whitehall, on the way to Westminster, when three "goes" of whisky were consumed at Carl's expense, after which Mr. Clinch insisted on ordering three cigars at *his* expense. And then they walked amicably towards Westminster.

"Well, sir, I'll say good-bye here. I'm going to take the train home. I'll write and let you know when I want to see you again."

"All right. Good-bye, Mr. Clinch."

And he disappeared into the Westminster Bridge Station.

"I say, Carl," exclaimed Sandy, taking his friend's arm, "George Clinch is good business, isn't he?"

"He scored rather heavily off you in the matter of a photo—and he scored off me, too, in the matter of my dreadful old parent. You see, Sandy, the way it is is most likely this:—Shute has got on some plant or other. Doesn't matter what, but we take for granted he has some. And my dreadful old parent has pitchforked Shute into society—of a kind—for a consideration. Governor never did anything except for a consideration. Why he has gone to America goodness knows. Probably because England disagreed with him, as he once observed to me many places do."

"Clinch showed a good deal of tact about that. You see, he wasn't sure whether you'd like Corsar senior's name to be mentioned before me, and didn't mention it."

"Oh, yes. That man's got his head screwed on the right way. Now, look here, Sandy, you are forgetting all about yourself. It isn't often that you do that, no doubt. But you are. Where are you going to dine to-night?"

"Hadn't thought of it. Where you like."

"Well, dine with me at the Bavarian, and we'll have some beer, and talk things over. Have you any idea whatever what you are going to do?"

Sandy looked round him right and left at the stalwart marines, dragoon guards, hussars, and artillerymen lounging and swaggering about, conversing in groups, or breaking off conversation to waylay some ragged loafer or half-starved-looking workman, to dangle glittering expectations before his dazed or wary eyes, to represent the bubble reputation as of the most iridescent and attractive description, and to enlarge on the advantages of a free kit.

And Sandy said—

"Yes, old fellow, I know what I'm going to do. Let's go and dine. I've had nothing since ten but talk, and some of that fatiguing. Yes, I know what I'm going to do. And I believe I'm right at last."

"I shouldn't wonder if you were, Sandy."



## CHAPTER XXI.

“SIR, I WILL!”

THE principal and most striking feature about the city of Smyrna, Ohio, is its dazzling and aggressive newness. The inhabitants are exorbitantly proud of this feature, and point out invariably to inquiring visitors the fact that three years ago there was nothing on the space now occupied by Smyrna city except mere unproductive landscape, with wooded hills, trees, and a river with fine abrupt rocks projecting into it here and there, merely useful as surfaces on which to paste advertisements of liver pills. Whereas now it is a flourishing and prosperous city of some seventeen thousand inhabitants, who produce and support eleven daily newspapers, and many other indispensable ingredients of civilised life, such as oyster-saloons, horse-cars, saw-mills, gaily dressed militia, politicians, and several self-made men who live in large aggressively luxurious houses, and are known as financial powers. These have found that the shortest and easiest road to fortune for a man of parts is to watch other people at work and lay odds on the result—in other words, to speculate.

And though the barometer of commercial morality fluctuates a little at Smyrna, it never gets very high. It generally stays at Foul, with occasionally vibratory impulses towards Stormy. This is not a place where people are green-horns, nor is it a place where they are over-cautious. They have no great faith in other peoples' ventures, unless the other people visibly profit by them; but they thoroughly enjoy any speculation which is of the nature of a game of chance, or may be compared to a bet. And they are imbued with the true spirit of evolution, so necessary to a rising state or city: they never pity a loser. This is the way to get on.

There are three ways of treating the loser, that weaker one

who goes to the wall prepared for him and his like from the beginning. One way is to express pity without helping. This is frequent. Another is to neither help nor pity. This is the Smyrna city method, though not peculiar to that rising focus of civilisation. The third is rare, and not admitted to be consistent with business-like and smart habits at all: it consists in helping and pitying, especially the former. But fortunately very few people do this, or so many losers, weaker brethren, and unfit ones would survive that they would swamp the fields of competition, overstock the labour market, insert the thin end, and pave the way for the ultimate millennial reign of pauperdom and pensioned mediocrity.

"No, sir!" said the Honourable Paul Stuart Potter, Mayor of Smyrna, chosen delegate of the Whoop Section Ticket for State Legislature, on the Coppertail and McDonnell Platform of the Smyrna Convention of the Carpet-bag Party, in private life a very sufficient dentist, addicted to the scientific use of the imagination, "the weakest goes to the wall. Where else should he go? What's walls for anyhow? Gentlemen, what is a wall? It is a structure of a thin and ephemeral kind, composed of bricks placed in imperfect contact with one another by playful Irishmen. Here is a case of the weaker party going to the wall for support and subsistence."

"The weakest thing I ever did was to go on Wall Street any way," remarked Dr. Dennis Moriarty, Professor of the Smyrna University, with a pleasant laugh at Mr. Potter's rather elephantine *facetiæ*.

"What do you say to that, Mr. Corsar?" continued the Hon. Paul S. Potter. "I believe you devote a good deal of your statutes to the proppin' up of the falling at the expense of the rising over in England. Isn't that so?"

They were all having a quiet interview with drinks one very hot day at the Grand Trunk House, the newest and largest hotel in Smyrna.

"You are only too correct in your estimate, Mr. Potter. Honest and industrious men in England have to pay taxes to support incapables, loafers, drunkards, and failures generally in carrying on a useless existence. The more property you accumulate by energy, toil, and what you would call smartness, the more heavily are you rated to support the incapables,

loafers, and drunkards, as above. It is putting a premium on idleness."

"Ah, why shouldn't the poor devils be idle at all?" said Dr. Moriarty. "I never do a bit more worruk than I can help. And I don't mind votin' for forty Bills to compel you grain, oil, and railroad corner men to pay taxes to keep me in tobacco and whisky. An' that's the chapest way of encorragin' the neetuv producks, too, that ye're all ravin' about."

"Well, I am trying to be a man of business, in an amateur sort of way, no doubt," said Mr. Corsar, "and I find the first requisite is to divest oneself of sentiment. Of course, I don't confess that to everybody; but among men of business, like yourselves, it's no use pretending, is it?"

"Certainly not, sir," said Mr. Potter. "Sentiment is too thin, 'ceptin' you want it sometimes in the way of politics. That is, you want other people to have it. Are you a member of the British Legislature, sir?"

"Well, no. I can't say that I have turned my mind particularly to politics."

"Well, sir. Mr. John Pooley Morton, of the *Smyrna Democrat*, 'lowed you were a member of the British House of Lords out on the rampage. I don't want to pry into any man's private life; no American ever does; but we can assure you, sir, it won't go further than this room if you like to confide in us."

"Well, yes. I remember the gentleman's name. I think he did me the honour of 'interviewing' me yesterday morning."

"The publication of that interview, sir, together with your introduction to me, have been the reason of the visit to you of this present deputation. Smyrna city 'lows you are a British lord going to try gold-mining, and, sir, Smyrna city pities you, but admires."

"Smyrna city is very kind."

It will be observed that Mr. Corsar neither admitted nor denied the correctness of the impression that he was a peer incognito. And now he gently led the conversation away to channels leading more directly to some sort of purpose.

"Now, do you know anything about gold-mining, Mr. Potter?"

"I have done a good deal in that way—in shares. I never saw a gold-mine."

"Haven't you, now? Fancy that. Have any of you gentlemen any practical experience of modern gold-mining? Dr. Moriarty?"

"Not I! Have you, Mr. Heintz?"

"No. Noddabit. Moech better geeb a store. I geeb a store over to Carmel, mister, negs depôt to Marathon westward oud off here. You gom and zee me, and I'll dek you raït round."

Mr. Heintz was a small, quiet, fair man, with spectacles and a fresh complexion, a German suit of clothes, and an inoffensive expression. There was only one other member of the deputation, and he sat stern and silent, sipping a glass of rye whisky and a glass of ice water alternately. He had been introduced as Mr. Joel Haycraft, and had shaken hands heavily, observing, "Glad to know *you*, Mr. Corsar." He was a worn, sunken-eyed, grizzly-bearded, aged-looking man of about fifty or fifty-five. He was thin, long-limbed, suntanned, and inscrutable, shabbily dressed, spoke with a strong accent, and sometimes spat on the floor. The rest of the deputation used spittoons. He looked far nearer the ideal Yankee type of fiction and caricature than any of the rest.

"Now, that's unfortunate," said Mr. Corsar, "as you will less fully appreciate the importance of the yield when you look through my short abstract of the prospectus. Fact is, this mine's a hobby of mine, and instead of staying over in England and receiving dividends, I prefer to come here and personally superintend the out-put. Of course, I have no intention of refusing to communicate the names of would-be shareholders to the office in New York or London, but please not to regard me as an agent, or a person in any way desirous of inviting you to put down your money. I know there's nothing like talking plain English to keen business men like yourselves, and so I tell you that the yield of gold at present is such that the more shares I can get into my own hands, at a decent price, the better I shall be pleased. So, you see, I have no motive in wanting you to subscribe—in fact, I don't want you to. I don't refuse. I daresay you can have shares, and don't mind telegraphing if you do, but it is not strictly my business."



"Quite so," said Mr. Potter. "You're an amatoor ; you've read stories about western gold-mining, and want to see it done. I know. And you're one of them dooks, only you won't 'low it. And what you'll do is this. You'll throw your dollars down a dirt-hole. I speak straight. I'm Paul S. Potter, and allus have spoken straight."

"But if the dirt-hole yields profit already?"

Then silent and sombre Mr. Joel Haycraft took up his parable and spake. And he said—

"I worked two years at that dash-blanked mudhole called the 'Anna Maria.' I got a fevier, and I got a broke leg. An' that's all I got, an' all anybody ever got, an' if your comp'ny, sir, have got a grain of gold out o' there they've done a pretty steep thing. And that's the frozen truth."

This was a heavy one, and unexpected. No one else had ever seen the mine up to now. But Mr. Corsar came up smiling.

"Mr. Haycraft, whose experience is certainly much greater than mine, appears to doubt the truth of my statements. I am not accustomed to that. Still, I don't suppose any offence is meant, and I don't mean to take any. All I can fairly say is this: If you don't believe it, come and see! I hope that's speaking straight."

And Mr. Corsar smiled radiantly around him, the personification of courtesy, rectitude, and worth. He really might have been an ornament to the House of Lords, but would have looked more at home on the bench of bishops. For a judge he was not sufficiently stern—too much sympathy, too much friendly partiality and bountiful compassion glowed in his handsome old face. You felt you could sit down before him and sing—

"A fine old English gentleman, one of the olden time!"

He suggested port wine, mail-coaches, Charlies, highwaymen, Bow Street runners, prizefights, and all the merry pursuits and soothing features of good (bad, or indifferent) King George's golden days. And he said, in his candid, manly way—

"Well, if you don't believe me, come and see!"

And Mr. Joel Haycraft, who had led a hard, unsuccessful, roving life, who possessed the heart of a Diogenes, the hand

of a coalheaver, the wooden face of a figure-head, with a very far from wooden brain inside it, replied—

“Sir, I will!”

Mr. Corsar was momentarily stricken dumb, but had the presence of mind to bow. Mr. Heintz turned to Mr. Haycraft and said—

“Vot for? Two-dree days railroad chost to zee dat olt mine? Te enemy of your laife.”

“Mr. Corsar,” said Mr. Potter, “I hope, sir, you will not consider me, and Dr. Moriarty, and Mr. Max Heintz, as sharing in Mr. Joel Haycraft’s opinions.”

“Thank you, gentlemen. Nevertheless, I trust you accompany Mr. Haycraft on our visit to my pit, the ‘Anna Maria,’ for my satisfaction if not for your own.”

Mr. Corsar thought there was nothing like cheek. It had often done him good service before. Of course he had never expected any one to accept his challenge, but now it had been accepted the only thing to do was to make the best of it and trust the rest, as he beautifully put it, to Providence. “That Providence,” reflected he, ironically, “which has never long deserted me. The cherub that sits up aloft and takes care of us poor rogues.”

“What’s the good of ut at all, Haycraft?” said Dr. Moriarty to the sombre and laconic Joel, who replied—

“I don’t wish to offend Mr. Corsar. But I shall take the cars right there when Mr. Corsar has concluded his residence in Smyrna.”

“Then, by —— I’ll go, too,” said Mr. Potter. “The whole crowd ’ll go too, and we’ll make a big thing of it. I have, I guess, sufficient interest in the Grand Trunk Road to make money for the journey no consideration. I’ll get a special train if it comes to that. Mr. Corsar, sir, allow us to wish you good morning. We will meet again this evening.”

And the deputation shook hands heavily and withdrew, with the exception of Heintz, who lingered. Outside, Dr. Moriarty said, “He’s a grand jantleman, and I believe he’s an old Oirish family.”

“I’ll lay him to be an English nobleman on the rampage,” said Potter. “Them teeth of his cost thirty dollars if they cost a bit.”

“I ’low him to be a fraud,” stated Haycraft, spitting

calmly, "and a first-class, A1, copper-bottomed one. Don't think any wuss of him for it, either."

"Will you bet?" said Potter.

"I will. I bet a thousand dallers no gold ever has been got out of the 'Anna Maria,' or ever will be, 'ceptin what's put into it."

"I bet a thousand dallers gold *is* found there, because this English gentleman says so. Moriarty can hold the money and bear witness for both."

"That is so. Come round and have a drink."

Meanwhile Mr. Heintz lingered.

"Well, Mr. Heintz, what can I do for you?"

And then a curious thing happened. The fresh-faced, fair little man suddenly lost his German accent, and said in a very ordinary tone—

"Say, is that all right?" pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, presumably at the imaginary situation of the "Anna Maria."

"Is *what* all right, Mr. Heintz?"

"Oh!—things generally. You took it all beautiful. I admired at you then, and tried to help you out of it."

"Will you kindly explain yourself, Mr. Heintz?"

"Oh, G—— d—— your injured dignity, and G—— d—— Heintz too. I'm Jack Dillon, down Leadville, Texas. I never knew you personally, but I've seen you often enough. Now then, stop that hand of yours. Don't shoot. I'm a friend."

Mr. Corsar moistened a very dry pair of lips, and said: "I thought you were dead!"

"So your pardner Shute thinks. Here's his marks on me, too. I'm looking for him. But I've no malice against you. *He's* nothin' to do with this plant?"

"Not a bit," replied Mr. Corsar, readily, "I split with him long ago. But I wish you wouldn't use the expression 'plant.' It suggests fraud."

"And people might hear it? By —— I think you're pretty nearly the steepest thing I've seen. American smartness ain't in it with your aristocratic demeanour and grit. You've got the sand. You'll get through. I should be sorry, real sorry, if you didn't get through. See you're in a difficulty. Now show me your hand, halve stakes, and I'll help you; and by —— Jack Dillon never lied to a pardner!"

The one rascal looked at the other steadily for a few seconds. Then Corsar laughed pleasantly and said—

“Done!”

“Shake hands! Now then see, here. Of course there ain’t a d——d dust-grain of gold there?”

“Not a grain.”

“Nor any plant, ’ceptin’ the one delicacy forbids us to mention, and rusty stuff the despairin’ duffers of former days have left behind ’em?”

“Not a bit. At least not that I know of.”

“Nor any workmen, nor any ‘spirited board of control,’ nor any ‘thirty-stamp mills’ as per prospectus, nor any anything?”

“Not a thing. You see I’m candid.”

“Now see here, this is what we’ve got to do. You will stay here a few days, make yourself agreeable, get friends and get shareholders. Get at the women. They’ll do anything for a lord, ’specially a good-looking, beautiful talker like you. Meanwhile I’ll get one or two bummers who’ll do anything for a dollar’s worth o’ whisky, and take ’em right there. We’ll rig up a wash of some kind, and salt the thing scientifically. Joel Haycraft even, smart as he thinks he is, won’t expect that, thinking, as he will, that you have not yet been to the mine, and never dreaming of me having any finger in it. If they believe in it, well and good; we’ll about bull that market. If they don’t, we’ll just raise hell. Well, there’s Potter, Moriarty, and Haycraft; you and I can settle them. Got a pistol?”

“Oh yes.”

“Well, if any one raises a row, shoot right into the crowd. There’ll be nobody there but us, and my shaloots will keep underground and witness nothing—shoot ’em’ if they did.”

“Yes, I suppose that’s the only way,” said Mr. Corsar, calmly. “And if I succeed, my friend,” ruminated Mr. Corsar, silently, “I’ll shoot *you* on the earliest opportunity that offers. You’d get drunk some day and talk, Jack Dillon. Besides there’s the profits, and Shute. Yes. And the United States will then be rid of one of its superfluity of rascals.”

“Well, then, we’re pardners?” said the more honest rogue.

“We are,” replied the more thorough. “By the way, do you know exactly where the infernal mine is?”



"I'll find out that easy enough from some of the agents round here."

"We had better depart now, hadn't we?"

"Yes. Say, this is a big kite we're starting. Hope it'll fly?"

"So do I. By the way, where's Shute?"

"Don't know. Down New'rleans way, likely."

"That is all right," reflected Mr. Corsar, "they're not likely to hear of each other." "Good-bye, Dillon, for the present. Have anything more?"

"Not now. So long!"

And Mr. Dillon disappeared in search of suitable "shaloots" to send on to the distant territory where the "Anna Maria" mine was supposed to be effervescing with superfluous bullion, to get apparatus—though it were of the slowest, cheapest, and most old-fashioned kind—into something with a superficial resemblance to working order at once, while Mr. Corsar remained to be entertained by his Smyrna circle of acquaintances—a circle which daily enlarged, but always limited itself strictly to rich people of both sexes. Mr. Corsar gently repelled the insinuation that he was "one of them dooks," with a kind of deprecating modesty which only increased the general conviction. Besides, every one knew that now-a-days the enterprising British nobility have taken to all sorts of speculative fads, from buying land in Iowa to becoming proprietors of hansom cabs in London. Beyond this, the aristocracy of Smyrna were as ignorant as any French novelist of the habits, titles, and privileges of the aristocracy of Great Britain. So that this refined, handsome, acute, courtly, and facetious old ruffian really had them at a great disadvantage.

Ladies compared his taste in dress, and delicacy and tact in conversation, to that of—say Mr. Joel Haycraft, and the like of him, who suffered in the comparison. And the results came in in the form of purchases of shares in the "Anna Maria." Nobody is so completely wise and so fully expert as not to have a weak point somewhere, and James Corsar would gently and patiently probe away till he found that weak place, and when the suitable occasion arrived, jammed his prospectus (altered to suit American minds) into it. He always found occasion. As the exemplary and ingenious

Madame Marguerite d'Angoulesme, Queen of Navarre, and a few other people have observed, it is not the occasion which makes the sin, but the sin which forges the occasion.

When people ignorantly assert that honesty is the best policy, they forget that the practice of dishonesty is usually confined to persons who suffer under many disadvantages of education, of intellect, and of social status, to say nothing of physical cowardice, which is an inconvenience few rascals can thoroughly free themselves from. But given an educated, intellectual, tasteful, courageous, entirely unscrupulous man, with a wide and long experience of many grades of human nature, and an immense field of villainous possibilities opens out before him. That Mr. Corsar was more or less intellectual is evident from his conversation. That he was courageous is evident from the calm way in which he behaved under very trying circumstances at the Grand Trunk House. That he was unscrupulous, if any doubt that they may be reassured from his little interview with Mr. Jack Dillon, whom Cyrus Shute always represented as one of the victims of his bow and spear in the old Texas days, but who still escaped bullet, rail, and rope, one or all of which many persons hopefully pray may some day be his lot.

And the days crept on and the crisis grew nigh. At last the Honourable Paul S. Potter, Professor Moriarty, and Mr. Joel Haycraft accompanied Mr. Corsar on to an extremely elegant car on the Grand Trunk Road, amid waving of handkerchiefs by the beauty and fashion of Smyrna city assembled at the depôt; and the train started off, Mr. Corsar, hat in hand, smiling on the car platform, with a flower in his coat. It was a very dry-lipped smile. And so he set off, as on a triumphal procession, slowly through the streets of Smyrna, with a great bell clanging on the locomotive to clear the way before him.

At Carmel, the next station, Mr. Max Heintz boarded the train, remarking, "Ah! how vos you, sir? Let's haf a tring to der kolt-mine, vere de leedle kobold's are vorking for you. Yes?" And he laughed merrily, in his simple-hearted German way. When he was alone on the platform with Mr. Corsar he again became Jack Dillon, and said—

"I've sent 'em off. We shall find a d——d old stamp mill at work, pounding out mush by the bucketful. It'll be shaky

work, gettin' the gold into the wash, though, with that infernal old mud-dob there with the minor prophet's front name."

"How much gold have you got?"

"Scraped an old French napoleon to bits. Hope there won't be a nugget found with a gold nose and waxed moustache on it. No. That's a joke. I've done better work than that."

"But—with all deference to your superior knowledge—isn't that a very small quantity?"

"Who in h—ll's goin' to pay for half a ton of gold-dust? I'd like it to yield that, in bucketsfull, naterally—but we can keep puttin' 'haftins' back into the wash muck. Got your pistol loaded, in case of difficulties?"

"Yes. What a nuisance that man Haycraft is?"

"Oh, perdish him, any way. Ha'f stakes, partner?"

"Certainly." And the train racketed and jingled on, and the sun went down and the great yellow moon shone over great endless plains, or glowed behind black pine-clad bluffs, as it went ever racketing and jingling on; and when the sun rose in carmine and gold and green horizontal flame-streaks, it racketed and jingled still, and Mr. Corsar, on his sleepless platform, snuffed the morning air. "This," he muttered to the startled creatures who fled devious from the track, "is life or death. Which?"

## CHAPTER XXII.

COLONEL SHUTE IS ASTONISHED, AND JOHN RAYNHAM PERPLEXED.

POOR old John Raynham was naturally very uncomfortable after having performed what he had considered his duty with regard to Sandy. For many reasons. First of all, there is always a kind of regretful recoil when a difficult and unpleasant duty has been accomplished. It is difficult to avoid the thoughts, "Perhaps I went too far," "Perhaps it might have been better if I had not been so precipitate," "Perhaps things might have righted themselves."

Then he had by no means anticipated that Sandy would fly into a rage and bolt with a small portmanteau into space, leaving no clue as to his whereabouts; nor that May would become silent, oppressively dutiful and submissive, melancholy and sometimes snappish, the whole culminating in a bilious attack, with headaches, tea and dry toast in her room at odd times, and a tendency to read sombre poetry and satirical novels, causing Mrs. Raynham to observe that she had no patience with her, and Kate and Ethel to be decorously surprised, publicly compassionate, and privately triumphant. They confided to one another that May had really been allowed to get a great deal too silly, to have her own way too much, and to over-read herself.

Then, again, John Raynham was really fond of Sandy, and felt extremely anxious to know what had become of him. "He was such an impulsive fellow! Why couldn't he have stayed quietly and talked things over a bit? There's no saying now what absurdity he may commit, and set people talking, too." John Raynham was kind and easygoing usually, but had a strong sense of duty combined with a very far from keen insight into human nature, the result of which was that he occasionally got a little muddled, with a tendency



to make mistakes and pitch into the wrong people or say the right thing the wrong way, all recoiling ultimately in the form of remorse and distress on himself.

Anybody but John Raynham would have recognised the absurdity of Sandy's "staying quietly to talk over" anything, more especially when he had been told he was a failure, that he had spent money without getting any return for it, and that he was "Allowed the Ordinary Degree," and had better become apprentice to some respectable firm—say of brewers. Anybody else would have known that wholesome and merited as these revelations were, they were not calculated to soothe Sandy or make him particularly prudent, he being just one of those people who jump over (and incidentally into) six ditches rather than walk along one road.

And then the poor old boy puzzled his head to "make it up somehow" to May, who was evidently far more irritated and sorrow-stricken than he thought she would be, or than she thought anybody could discern. He felt that he had injured her in some way, though he certainly had intended to act for her good, and she acted the exasperating part of an injured person who is of a forgiving disposition. And then she was unwell, and John Raynham got alarmed. At last he felt that he must have committed some crime, and that it was really very kind of everybody to forgive him and tolerate his society—that perhaps it might be as well to give Sandy an allowance out of his own pocket and implore him to return. He ventured to hint something of this, in the watches of the night, to his wife, who said, "Rubbish!" very decidedly.

Then he began to wonder what made that fellow Shute take such an interest in the matter; whether there had not been some symptoms of a growing intimacy between Shute and May, and what he ought to think about that. And he said one day, during the family dinner, "I wonder who this Colonel Shute really is? He's an odd fellow."

"He is very quaint and amusing," said May, "but I should think his private record was very curious. I rather like him really, though he does suggest revolvers, whisky, and euchre, whatever that is."

"I am sure he is very nice and kind," said Kate. This meant that she had read in some paragraph-paper that he had twenty thousand a year."

"And *so* American," said Ethel, "it's quite funny."

"Wouldn't it be rather funny if he wasn't?" said May, "seeing that he is, and always was, an American."

"At the same time," said John Raynham, "we know very little about him."

"Waller is very enthusiastic about him," said Mrs. Raynham.

"Oh, Waller! Yes. But you see he knows no more about him than I do. At least, I don't think he does. He didn't a short time ago. Hang it all, when you come to think of it, the fellow's been in and out here like one of the family almost—and a very pleasant, downright, plainspoken, honest fellow he seems to be, I will say that—but without our really knowing him from Adam."

"Well, we know him now, at any rate," said Mrs. Raynham.

"Do you?" said May. "I don't."

"Well, it's a pity then," said her mother, "for he seldom had a word for any one else when you were there. It was always a bouquet, or a fan, or something for 'Miss May,' as he *would* call you. I'm not blaming you. You'll probably learn a great deal more sense from Colonel Shute than that wretched wicked boy Sandy."

Here May became rather red, and calm with suppressed wrath. She *felt* pale, proud and patient. She *looked* rather sulky, but none the less pretty for that—though it is no use being pretty to one's mother and sisters, who call exerting the power of beauty on a suitable and pleasant man—or two—"being really *too* silly with Mr. So-and-So. I couldn't help wondering what he'd think of the way you must have been brought up." (As if any Mr. So-and-So cared twopence how a girl had been "brought up" as long as she was good to look at and "nice" to talk to!)

"I fail to perceive the wickedness," replied May, in what she hoped was a chill, calm, and cutting manner, "unless it's wicked to have good taste and to be too poor to gratify it."

(Oh, oh! My poor dear special-pleading May, what on earth do you know about his tastes? Would you like to know how he is gratifying them just now?)

"Don't be silly," said Mrs. Raynham. "I'm not going to argue that all over again. Besides, don't you see how it annoys your father? Let's change the subject."

"Certainly," said May, "I am not aware that I introduced the subject."

Mrs. Raynham's position of course was that Sandy's wickedness consisted in having no money, though she could scarcely say so in so many words. And as this kind of suppressed skirmish, with hints, innuendoes, open rebuke, affectionate but exasperating harangues, cool and cutting retorts, and all the thousand and one pernicious arts of a feminine civil war, arose now nearly every day, John Raynham's life slowly became a burden to him, and he felt like the tyrant father of the old comedy. "I'm afraid I'm an old fool," he concluded, "but I don't see yet where I was wrong."

And one evening, after dinner, when May had gone to her own apartment to confide the hollowness of things and other original discoveries to Peter and the piano, when Kate and Ethel had gone out for what they called a "turn" in the grounds, John Raynham said—

"How would you like it if he were to——"

"What, dear?" said his wife, looking up suddenly from a doze over a society paper, "I didn't know you were speaking."

"I say, how would you like it if he were to want to marry one of the children?"

"Who, dear?"

Of course it is very absurd to suppose people can know what we have been thinking about for the last ten minutes, though we often act on such a supposition, and make speeches which are, like this, simply the direct continuation of our own train of thought to people who are thinking of something totally different, and expect them to understand.

"Who? Why Shute, of course."

"Don't you think, on the whole, it might be rather a good thing? There seems to be no doubt that he is very well off."

"Well but, taking that for granted, do you think it would otherwise be a good thing? It is true we know nothing against him."

"Gracious, how you talk! One would think he was a thief, to hear you go on against him!"

"I am not 'going on against him.' I like him."

"Very well then!"

Mrs. Raynham, good, innocent woman, could not conceive a person credited (by society) with twenty thousand a year to be capable of any but venial sins. That is a very commonplace prejudice, it may be said. So it is. Very. And as common as it is commonplace. So much the worse. And as long as English parents regard their children's marriage as a matter of business and bargaining, so long will it be a commonplace matter to see girls disposed of to highest bidders of antecedents unknown and unenquired into. Moral and physical antecedents I mean. The beautiful maternal *στοργή* is sharp enough about the pecuniary antecedents, goodness—or rather badness—knows.

Which possibly accounts for the fact that in this highly moral, respectable, and Christian country there have been in one short session lately about as many divorce cases as there are days in leap-year, nearly two hundred of the same being undefended. Do you know what undefended generally means, mesdames the mothers of marketable daughters? It means not only inability, but, as often as not, unwillingness to defend—a silent acknowledgment that they cannot help it. And then you know what becomes of them—or perhaps you do not; you are too pure-minded to know anything of the sort.

You keep your daughters from reading the cases in the papers; don't you think you might keep them a little more from figuring in them, if you tried?

"I tell you what I was thinking of doing," went on John Raynham, "I think I'll just run up to town to-morrow."

"What for?"

"Oh, several things. I'll see Waller, for one, and find out what there is to be found out about Shute. Then I'm rather anxious to know what Master Sandy's doing."

"Oh he'll turn up fast enough, when he wants some more money."

"I don't know so much about that."

The upshot was that Mr. Raynham did run up to town, but not the next day. He wrote first to Carl Corsar, addressing the letter to Fenchester, asking for an interview. He did not suppose that Carl was at Fenchester, and wrote, "To be forwarded" on the letter. His object was twofold. In the first place, this Carl Corsar was Sandy's intimate friend, and would



be very likely to know something about his whereabouts. In the second, Carl was the son of the man who had been Colonel Shute's social sponsor, and might possibly know something about him.

Carl was in London, and replied that he would be happy to see Mr. Raynham, at any time and place the latter might appoint. So the latter appointed a time and said he would call.

The day before this appointment, Mr. Raynham met his brother Waller at the House of Commons, after vainly chasing him through his clubs, chambers, and other haunts, and Waller promptly asked him to dinner. Waller thoroughly enjoyed asking people to dinner. There was a solidity, an antiquity about it which pleased him, and he would sit a long time afterwards drinking port, and talking, which he liked, but could scarcely do after lunch.

"You will join us at dinner?" therefore said Waller.

"Who's us?"

"Well, there's your friend Shute," ("Oh, he's *my* friend Shute now, is he?" thought John) "and Mackinnon. You know Mackinnon, son of the late General Sir George Mackinnon, who was up with the Wurree-gur expedition?"

"I have heard of him. I don't think I know him."

"Fact is, he wanted to know Shute. He'd heard about him a good bit, and as he was out in the States in the civil war, fighting on the same side, he thought it might turn out to be some one he knew. Mackinnon's been everywhere, and generally knows everybody. So I asked 'em to meet one another. I didn't tell Shute about Mackinnon's experiences, so it will be a little surprise for him. Be great fun to see two old campaigners draw each other out."

"I shouldn't wonder," said John Raynham, quite without malice. "Yes, I'll come, Waller. Much obliged. What time?"

"Eight. It's a Wednesday night, and there's nothing to keep me at the House. Not at the club, at my chambers."

"All right."

And Mr. Raynham strolled away, thinking what a lucky opportunity this would be of picking up some real information. Then he began to ask himself what would the effect of his finding that Shute was all he represented himself to be—

a rich man, of an adventurous past, a mixture of that keen honour, rough pathos, and dry humour with which a certain late development of American romantic literature has made us very familiar. Supposing all this to be real—and John Raynham did not see why it should not be—and supposing in plain English this man wanted to marry May—as it seemed not improbable that he did—what was to be said and done? The man was a good deal older than May, for one thing, yet not so very much older. He could scarcely be forty yet, more like eight-and-thirty or so. Well, no harm in that. Has had time to sow his wild oats. He seemed a shrewd, thoughtful, kind-hearted fellow. Of course, if May didn't want him, that settled the matter. She shouldn't have him. Nobody wanted to force her. Pity, though, to miss such a chance if the fellow really were so well off after all. But then again about those mining shares. These things generally had such a bad name. Still, of course, there *are* such things in the world as real mines with real gold coming out of them. Hadn't he seen a model of a nugget at the Great Exhibition as big as two men's heads, round which stood always an admiring and reverent crowd? And so John Raynham walked along the sunny Victoria Embankment, wavering and hovering.

In due time the dinner hour arrived, and with it Waller's guests at his extremely luxurious flat in Victoria Street, which he apologetically called a bachelor den. Major Mackinnon was a tall, thin, handsome, long-faced Scotchman, with close-cropped fair hair, grizzling and thin at the top, a leathery skin, thick eyebrows, an eyeglass, and an accent. He was evidently a gentleman, and had steadfast blue eyes which looked calmly and straightly in the face of any one who spoke to him, as they had once or twice, maybe thrice, looked at cannon's mouths. He might have been about fifty. Major Mackinnon had been in more than one military service, and I believe had held higher ranks in some foreign armies, but in the English Army List he figured as major, retired on captain's pension. Cyrus was resplendent with the white waistcoat, the pink coral buttons, the crimson kerchief, and the blazing "bosom-jewel."

After introduction, the weather, thin turtle, and sherry, Major Mackinnon remarked courteously, and in all good faith—

"I understand you were in the Confederate army, Cornel Shute?"

"I was so. Fourth Virginia Cavalry, under General Robert Lee."

"Ah, well, you would recollect that affair at Gaines' Mills?"

"I was there."

"So was I."

"Oh!"

"I was there with Stuart. Did you know poor Wheat, who was killed there?"

"Know him? You bet. Were you present at his death, Major?"

"No. I was galloping all the time backwards and forwards between Stuart and Wilcox."

"He died in my arms."

"Indeed! Then you had got mixed up with the Tigers, I suppose?"

"The which?"

"The Louisiana Tigers—Wheat's regiment," explained Major Mackinnon, putting up his eyeglass and contemplating Cyrus curiously.

"Yes, indeed. I lost my horse and chummed in with the first crowd I could find."

"Rough business that day altogether. Still we gave 'em their kail through the reek, didn't we?"

"Knocked spots out of 'em."

"Pity you fellows let M'Clellan sneak off from that nest of his on the Chickahominy. Still, MacGruder and 'Stone-wall' took it out of him afterwards."

This kind of conversation went on for some time, consisting of reminiscences on the part of Major Mackinnon and a good deal of listening and experimental replying on the part of Cyrus. As the latter had never been in any of the situations mentioned, had never figured in the war at all except in the character of a deserter to the other side, in which capacity he assisted in the sack of Peterborough when the fighting was over and the plundering begun, and had picked up his information from conversation and newspapers, he was exquisitely uncomfortable for most of the evening, and changed the conversation whenever he could. Still, when absolutely compelled to join in sympathetic reminiscences, he was ingenious

and audacious, and got through the ordeal at first pretty well, as Major Mackinnon was not naturally inclined to be suspicious of a fellow-guest.

But it was fated that Cyrus should put his foot in it. It is difficult to converse successfully for a whole evening on the details of a subject you know next to nothing about with another person who does, who has "been there," and is afflicted with an accurate memory for details. Cyrus once got hold of a general's name which he ascribed to the wrong side. It was a pardonable error for a person in his position, for there is no internal indication in such names as Whiting, Ewell, Wilcox, Blenker, Winder, Pope, Banks, Longstreet, and D. H. Holls, of what side in the struggle they belonged to. If Russians, or Prussians, or French are fighting, the names speak for themselves; but Winder, Blenker, Ruger, MacGruder & Co. are hopelessly perplexing, unless, like Major Mackinnon, you "were there," and knew them all intimately, as he appeared to.

And Major Mackinnon, being a Highlander, was peppery, and took several glasses of hot whisky after dinner. And Colonel Shute, being an American and nervous, took several glasses of cold whisky after dinner, while Waller prattled over the price of his port, and John looked on and listened, with a choice cigar.

"For a man who has fought for the 'Glorious Old Cause,' said Major Mackinnon—himself, perhaps, now a little ashamed of having fought for such a very inglorious old cause—"ye have but a short memory, Cornel."

"Haow?"

"I say, ye've a shorter memory than any man I know who has been through such things."

"Well, I allow that's a p'lite way of saying you don't believe it."

Cyrus was getting, not peppery, but into a quiet, "nasty" temper.

"Surr!" said Major Mackinnon, "I do not as a rule make use of circuitous phrases to convey that impression, and I regret to convey it at all."

Cyrus thought the Major was "caving in," so assumed an injured tone.

"I regret, Major, that you did convey it," he said. "I am sorry. I never doubted *your* word."



"I don't remember any one who ever did," quietly responded the real old soldier to the sham one, whose experiences with regard to his word had frequently been otherwise.

"I have seen men shot for less—down Leadville," pursued Shute, tenaciously.

"Good deal of that sort of thing out West, I suppose, still?" said Waller, cheerily, waking up to the fact that if some one did not change the subject, "something" would happen.

"Pretty free," said Shute.

And after a little desultory conversation Colonel Shute took his leave, feeling that "that was the thinnest ice he'd skated on for quite a while," and that he "must read up that blame war a bit before he met that dash dashed old plank-headed son of a howitzer again." He was unwilling to go first, thinking that Major Mackinnon would take advantage of his absence to criticise him freely and unfavourably to his host, but thought that problematic evil better than the present certain one, of either making some fatal mistake or having a quarrel. As a matter of fact, Major Mackinnon, being a gentleman, did nothing of the sort, but talked about Gladstone and the short service system, and then went away.

John Raynham was "put up" by Waller, and went to bed more puzzle-headed than ever about Colonel Cyrus Shute, and faintly conscious that he had been made a tool of by that warrior with regard to Sandy, and perhaps otherwise. Waller, of course, never conceived himself capable of being made a tool of by anybody, and dreamed that he was offered a peerage. John dreamed about General MacGruder, who wanted to marry May, and led about a Louisiana tiger, which said its name was Sandy Mackinnon, and they all underwent complicated journeys together in mid air across St. James's Park, to find somebody who kept a green plush canary which had the Victoria Cross. Which shows that John Raynham's mind was much disturbed, and that he had had curried prawns.

Cyrus Shute looked in at one of the American Exchanges at Charing Cross before he disappeared for the night from fashion's giddy maze, and glanced at the latest American papers; and in one of them—I think it was the *Ohio State Mail*—he saw a paragraph which made him sit suddenly down and mutter in profound amazement, "Hell alive!" He then

took a cab hastily to the Langham and asked for letters. There was one from America. He pocketed it and walked away down to the Criterion. He there drank a pint of champagne and smoked a big cigar at the expense of the latest purchaser of "Anna Maria" scrip, and read his letter. He looked at its date. He compared that date with one he had seen on the newspaper. Then he thought silently, with a scowling eye and protruding chin, still gazing at the open letter, which was dated from Smyrna, Ohio, so that the man drinking at the bar behind him could easily see it, as Cyrus was sitting down.

And the letter said,—“Played out. Sell all scrip you can at any price, and disappear.” And Cyrus pondered and chewed his cigar. And the man leaning on the bar behind him chatted pleasantly with the man who prepared Bourbon noggs and rye cocktails. And Cyrus produced a note-book, an envelope, and a stylographic pen, and wrote: “Dear Smithers, please buy for me all the ‘Anna Maria’ scrip that you can get to-morrow. Bear it down as cheap as you can. C.S.” And he underlined the word “buy.” Then he addressed the envelope to “C. Smithers, broker.”

When the man who was pleasantly chatting to the bar-keeper had got all this by heart, he left, and the dusk of Coventry Street received him. He liked the dusk of Coventry Street, and the still duskier neighbourhood to the north of it, for he knew how teeming with human curiosities of all kinds that neighbourhood was. And when he had got as far as the brilliant row of white lamps round the door of the Café de l’Etoile, he paused, took out a note-book, and made memoranda. Another addition to a very curious and highly interesting series of epitomised, scandalous chronicles which filled the note-book of Mr. George Clinch, late of the Crim. Inv. Dep.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CANDOUR OF CARL CORSAR.

CARL was sitting in his lodging in Somerset Street, Strand, in a folding wicker chair which he had dragged as near the open ground-floor window as possible this fine July day, reading a letter from Mr. Clinch. Somerset Street is one of those streets which slope down toward the Embankment, or rather end suddenly and precipitously above that ruinous waste which stretches along immediately behind the Embankment from the Savoy Hill to the Adelphi, and is approached from the Strand by forbidding-looking sooty passages and dismal flights of damp steps. Somerset Street is above these catacombs of tin-pot and old-boot-land, and its windows look out on a cheerful, sunlit fragment of Thames southward, and the changing, ceaseless stream of Strand circulation northward. When Carl came to London he always occupied these ground-floor rooms at No. 8, Somerset Street, and found them quite good enough.

Mr. Clinch's letter was a neat report of the progress of his investigations. And this was what he reported:—

1. Colonel Shute did not live at the Langham Hotel.
2. He was not known at all by any accidental American Clinch had conversed with in various resorts.
3. He *did* live in a lodging—a bedroom, for which he paid four shillings a week, in the Blackfriars Road, and went by another name there.
4. The “office” of the agency of the “Anna Maria Gold-Mining Company,” in St. Mary Axe, was simply an address for letters applying for information or shares, which Cyrus Shute called for at intervals, there being no premises owned or rented by the Company at all. And that was all at present.

"This looks rather squiffy for Shute, I think," murmured Carl. And he looked out of window and watched a cab halt at the door, from which John Raynham emerged. It was his appointed time, 11.30 A.M., the morning after the dinner at Waller's

"Glad to see you, Mr. Raynham. Sit down."

"I have one or two things I'd like to consult you about, Corsar, which I could not very well put in a letter. I think it was Inspector Bucket, wasn't it, who said 'never write letters?' However, I don't want to keep you long, so I'll come to the point at once. I don't know whether you know that Sandy Maxwell has left us rather suddenly about a fortnight ago?"

"I know that. But I understood that his departure was of a more or less involuntary nature—in fact, a kind of expulsion."

"Quite a mistake, really, Corsar. He left of his own accord, in a fit of temper, because I had been telling him, perhaps in a rather injudicious manner, or in a badly chosen moment, some things he didn't like to hear."

Carl thought this extremely probable from his own knowledge of Sandy's temperament, and said—

"Of course all that is no business of mine; still, being a friend of his I was sorry to find there was a difficulty of some kind."

"Well, I want him to come back and talk sensibly and quietly with us over his affairs, and if he will only put his shoulder to the wheel, do something and stick to it, I'm perfectly prepared to help him. But I'll have no more shilly-shally and playing about and wasting time and money. He's not a boy any longer."

"I should say what you propose was about the best thing—if you can get him to see it. What do you want him to do?"

"Well, now, there's a shipping agency at Liverpool, in the South American line of business. They'd take him on, I know, for a few years, and then send him out to Valparaiso or somewhere, with a salary. It would be an exciting life, I should think, looking after all that copper and wheat and Manchester goods."

"I should think the words South America and Valparaiso might fetch him. I should suggest it to him, Mr. Raynham,



without too much allusion to the Manchester goods. And I shouldn't lose much time about it, for he's hard-up and there's no knowing what he mayn't do in the meantime."

"How hard-up? He has money enough for the present—at least, he had when he left."

"Oh, I don't know. But I should see him as soon as I could, if I were you."

"Where is he?"

"Well, he *was* at ——— Adelphi Terrace when I saw him last, some days ago. He doesn't come near me much for fear I should think he wanted me to lend him money, or stand him meals. Of course I shouldn't think anything of the sort, but a poor gentleman is the most ticklish and scrupulous kind of creature to deal with."

"Well, well. We'll see what is to be done. And now for my next point. Do you know anything about this Colonel Cyrus Shute?"

Carl bit his lip.

"A little."

"Have you any doubt about his—er—genuineness?"

"I have no doubt on that subject at all."

"How do you mean? We are speaking in confidence here, of course."

"I mean that I am perfectly convinced that Shute is a fraud, and have always supposed so."

"The deuce you have! Then I really must say you might have—er——"

"Told you before? Yes. But look here. He only arrived at your place the evening I was fetched away by telegram, or I wanted to warn you. At the same time, Mr. Raynham, my position had difficulties I can scarcely explain to you. In the first place, I had only suspicion, no proof, and the man was my fellow-guest."

"But if you had suspicion, you had grounds for it, I suppose, and in a house where there are—er—ladies, and one thing and another, it's doosid awkward to have an unknown black sheep in among them. You know this Shute has been more or less intimate at my place, a thing he would never have been if I had heard a breath of suspicion about him. In fact, when I tell you that he has actually been paying attention to my youngest daughter——"

"D—— his cheek!" exclaimed Carl, suddenly standing up before the empty fireplace.

"Yes. And it makes me feel I've been made a fool of. I've been slowly waking up to that fact for the last day or two, and I think I've not been at all well treated. I think you might have said something if you are so sure about the matter, when you see a gentleman's family becoming victimised by an adventurer—as you make out this fellow to be."

"Listen, Mr. Raynham," said Carl, still standing up. "A good deal of what you say I hear for the first time. It was only from Sandy the other day that I knew Shute was still in your neighbourhood. Besides, I have more information now than I had then about him. I hesitated to give you the grounds of my suspicion from the nature of that ground, as I think you will understand. It is my duty, I suppose, to tell you, both to partly justify my own conduct, and to put you on your guard. Do you remember who introduced Colonel Shute to you?"

"Of course. It was your father, at the 'Idlers,' one night."

"That's the ground of my suspicion."

"I don't understand."

Carl bit his lip again.

"Well, then, in plain English, my father has spent his life in living on human credulity and folly, and is not ashamed of it. He and Shute appear to have been what they call partners years ago somewhere. Probably in New Orleans, or some such place, where gambling can be carried on to a lucrative extent."

John Raynham was bewildered.

"You amaze me! Do you mean to say——?"

"I'll let the old pump have it now," Carl thought, "as he's insisted on asking for it," and he continued—

"I mean to say that Corsar, senior, probably knew your brother's weak points, and traded on them, and gave Shute advice how to trade on yours; that he got those paragraphs about Shute's riches into the society papers as a leverage to get Shute into society, knowing that people in society are mostly fools enough to believe anything they read in a paragraph, and sycophants enough to pardon any sin to a rich sinner—to call his vulgarity eccentricity, his ignorance simple—

mindfulness, his blatant brazen cheek and impertinence, dry humour, and his coarse dissipation the natural outcome of a wild and roving existence, very pardonable as such. I really think there is a good deal of *raison-d'être* for people like Shute and my unhappy relative, as long as society ethics pave such a broad road of temptation for them—as long as people willingly dance round the brazen serpent, if a weekly anonymous muncle has described it as the golden calf."

"Dear me, dear me, Corsar. This is all very shocking. I never should have conceived it possible. What's to be done?"

"Well, I'll tell you what *I've* done, and you can decide for yourself what'll you'll do. I've put a fellow on his track to watch his goings-on, and report progress at intervals. He's a very smart fellow, and has told me a few things already which are significant. Listen!" And Carl read Mr. Clinch's letter.

"Well, but it seems to me, Corsar, you are the only person that's done anything sensible and useful in this business at all! I am sure I'm sorry if I pitched into you, but I was irritated at having been made such a fool of."

"All right, Mr. Raynham. Never mind the pitching in. You got that back, I think. Now, what do you propose?"

"I tell you what. This following up of Shute by a detective must cost a lot of money."

"No, it doesn't. Clinch and I are great friends by this time, and he doesn't take it out of me more than he can help."

"Well, you'll permit me, in my own interest, mind, and for my own satisfaction, to join you in this investigation."

"I see no reason why you shouldn't. Of course you *are* interested in the matter, no one more. But don't talk about all this to other people."

"Of course not."

"And, above all, not to Shute at present."

"But what shall I do if he comes down to Watermouth?"

"He can't come to stay at your place unless you ask him. And you needn't do that."

"Of course I must give my family a hint. I'll tell 'em Shute is not so rich as he was supposed to be. I should think that would do for a hint."

"That's your business, of course. Excuse me, but I wouldn't tell Mr. Waller Raynham at present anything. He

would be difficult to convince, and might possibly say something to Shute which would put him on his guard."

"I say, Corsar, you've got an insight into humanity."

"I've had to see a lot of the shady side of it."

"And you're a cool hand, you know. You don't mince matters when you do open your mouth."

"I don't wish to be offensive, but I must say what is essential."

"My dear fellow, I respect you for it. Can I see this man, what's his name, Clinch?"

"Oh, of course. Go round with you now if you like."

"Far from here?"

"No. Five or seven minutes."

"Will you lunch with me afterwards?"

"Thanks."

And as they walked along the Strand John Raynham felt that this keen-faced, good-looking man who was out of society, in a way, and given over to beetles and botany, and microscopes, and Darwin, had a different kind of mind to many he was accustomed to; that he had a direct plain-dealing way of going to first principles which was very unlike the kind of dealing John Raynham was accustomed to meet with in his circle of prosperous middle-class society.

At Charing Cross Mr. Raynham and Carl observed a soldier walking along in front of them, in a Highland dress, twirling a light cane in the orthodox way, glancing at the women right and left.

"That's a fine, broad, well set-up fellow," said Mr. Raynham, casually.

Carl looked at him.

"Yes. So he is."

Before they overtook him he had turned in at one of the gates of the railway station and disappeared from view. When they had gone by he re-emerged, saying to himself—

"Ouf! That was a near thing! I can't argue with him in the street. I don't want to cut him. I'm not ashamed of myself *now*—but, d—n it, you know, those two together was too much!"

It was Sandy.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE "ANNA MARIA," AND WHAT CAME OUT OF HER

WHEN the special train from Smyrna, bearing Mr. Paul Stuart Potter, Mr. Joel Haycraft, Mr. Max Heintz, and their English guest—or victim—Mr. James Corsar, reached the farthest point it was capable of reaching; after crossing endless plains, frightening much cattle, crawling up interminable slopes, and dashing down perilous zigzags, the travellers were conveyed by the strange, reckless, strap-slung, mule-drawn conveyance called a stage (meaning a coach—a similar inversion of language to that which calls a train frequently a railroad, in the land where English is called an "obsolescent patois") to Morgan Town, the nearest place approaching the dignity of a "city" to the "Anna Maria." And they all arrived one hot evening and slept at Smith's Spread Eagle Hotel—the only hotel, constructed of wood, and decorated with whitewash as the ark was with pitch.

When the two parties to the wager were discussing topics of the day and place with several very formidable-looking, partly-sober residents in the vicinity, in the bar of the Spread Eagle, Mr. Max Heintz proposed to Mr. Corsar to take a stroll in the cool—which was 90° in the shade—of the evening. Mr. Corsar, who hated rowdies who maundered about "placer" mining and quarrelled aimlessly in bars, accepted promptly, and they started, he in a thin black frock coat and a tall white hat, the other in a calico coat and a shady panama. As soon as they got well out of sight, Mr. Corsar said—

"Now then. How far is it?"

"Two miles. I've seen one of the boys. He'll guide us."

"Come on, then."

"See now, pard, my asking you to come out for a walk was right enough. It's a safe-conduct. I'm supposed to be looking after you, to see you didn't get foolin' with 'Anna Maria.' Hello, there!"

"Hello it is," replied a tall, thin, handsome, dirty man with a long fair moustache, dirty grey trousers, and striped cotton shirt, an English single-breasted four-buttoned "patch"-pocketed brown tweed jacket, very well cut, very discoloured, and with strips and curly strings of torn lining hanging out here and there, and on his feet a pair of old buttoned boots, with string put through the top buttonholes and coiled round the ankle, and (last relic of degraded dandyism!), drab cloth "uppers."

"How are you, Dillon?" he continued. "Is this our learned friend?"

"Yes. Mr.—Mackay," said Jack Dillon in a hasty introductory tone to Mr. Corsar, who professed himself happy to make Mr. Mackay's acquaintance.

Mr. Mackay bowed with an easy swagger. "Will our learned friend stand a drink?" he said.

"Dry up, Willie," said Jack Dillon, "and don't make a dam fool of yourself."

"Dried up is what I am, and therefore I want a drink. My ancestors saved me the trouble of making a dam fool of myself. I was born ready-made. But I want a drink."

"Perhaps it would be as well," said Mr. Corsar, "that Mr. Mackay should postpone his refreshments till after business." It was pretty evident that Mr. Mackay was "fresh."

"Perhaps it wouldn't," said Mr. Mackay, "with no disparagement to our learned friend's doubtless high, though mistaken principle that business and pleasure should be kept separate on a system of false precedence." And Mr. Mackay imperceptibly edged and shouldered the party in the direction of a wood and whitewash structure [from which he had just emerged.

"Better give in," said Dillon, in an undertone; "he'll have his own way, but he'll do our business."

"Well, Mr. Mackay," said Mr. Corsar, pleasantly, "what shall it be? Rye?"

"It was what I was at when I saw you men coming," said Mr. Mackay. "In fact, you may be said to have——

'met a body  
Going through the rye.'

Come in. Here's your other employé, gentlemen. You will excuse his condition. You will excuse his nationality and his resemblance to an elderly baboon in reduced circumstances. Sam, glasses round, please. This gentleman is responsible."

The other employé (*i.e.* the other person sufficiently unscrupulous to be selected by Jack Dillon the experienced) was a Mexican—at least, his father was, his mother being a Digger, and the resultant of these two forces being usually called by the graceful humour of the West, a Greaser. He reclined on the floor, pillowed on a spittoon, and snored. He *was* like an ill-fed and sickly-looking baboon. And the bar-keeper served out the glasses and handed the bottle across the bar.

Mr. Mackay filled for himself, and said, "I look towards our learned friend."

His learned friend smiled and said, "I likewise bow. Mr. Mackay, I can't help thinking you're an Englishman."

"Well, who the h—— ever thought I was anything else? If you want to know, I'm an M.A. of Cambridge, with a right to be placeted and non-placeted, and to proctorise errant youth."

"It is always gratifying to meet an educated fellow-countryman," said Mr. Corsar.

"Same here," said Mr. Mackay. "Have another with me?"

"Thanks."

Mr. Corsar helped himself very gingerly to the yellow rye whisky, and put a good deal of water in it. He was a very temperate man. Mr. Mackay filled his two "bits" worth pretty liberally, and remarked—

"Let's drink the health of the gold-mine! Have a drink, Jack Dillon?"

"See now, Willie," said Mr. Jack Dillon, winking from behind Mackay at Corsar, "You mustn't shout my name out like that. And you mustn't get drunk—not now, I mean. You can drink till you burst yer skin to-morrow."

"I never got drunk in my life," said Mackay, sucking the last glutinous drop from his glass, "never. Here, gimme summore. Will you oblige me with your name and college, sir?" said he suddenly to Mr. Corsar.

"Corsar, Audit."

"Fenchester, eh? Came over to play you football once, I think—or else it was something else. Have another?"

"Don't you think we've had enough, as a mere preliminary to business?"

"Oh, get out! Who's business? Who the blank blank cares for him—it, I mean? Look here, Corsar, you're a gentleman, 'Varsity man, temperate man, learned man, all that, don't you know. So'm I. Now you come out with me, and we'll have a walk. Here—you're a little unsteady, de'f'ler; take my arm." Here Mackay supported himself heavily on Mr. Corsar. "You're not accustomed to gettin' through the rye, like me. I am. You lean on me—that's it." Here Mr. Mackay (who had been "going through the rye" all the afternoon) nearly fell flat down. "Now you're all right—ain'tcher? Right'ch 'are, then. Hold up!"

Mr. Jack Dillon witnessed the devious promenade of worthy, respectable, nicely dressed Mr. Corsar and this hopeless rowdy with much amusement, and walked behind "to pick up the pieces," as he remarked.

"Look here, Corsar, you're gentleman, ain'tcher?"

"I hope so."

"'Varsity man—ole 'Varsity man, ain'tcher?"

"Yes."

"All right. So'm I." Then after a pause:—

"Gentlemen, ole 'Varsity men, you and me, ain' we?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Corsar, with truly Christian patience.

Mackay came close to his ear and murmured—

"Then I'll tell you something—these hobby-horses musn't hear. I don't want any profits—I sh'd only lose 'em at euchre and poker. But you own the 'Anna M'ria'—more'less?"

"Yes."

"Don't you waste y'r money salting her. She's all right."

"Don't speak loud, now. What do you mean?"

"Don'cheu pay ertogive—wha' she'll letchy' have f'nothing. There's lot of gole, lot of gole, in that old mine—only nobody



hit on the right place. Takes gentleman—ole 'Varsity man—to do that. I tell you because—your proppry, yo've rightknow—'cos I'm a gentleman and you're another, ain'tcher?"

Mr. Corsar turned deadly pale and thought silently for a moment; then he said—

"This is true, on your honour?" (easily perceiving the man's weak point).

"Yes."

"Can you keep it to yourself?"

"You bet—as these dam Yanks say—honour as a gentleman, as *we* say. Hold up! You're groggy, ole man, ain'tcher?"

"Look here, Heintz," said Mr. Corsar, "need we go to this beastly mine to-night? Can't Mackay do the—er—pickling process early to-morrow?"

"Don't seem as if Mackay was likely to do much to-night, certainly," said Mr. Jack Dillon. "Can you get up at dawn or so, Willie, to-morrow, and look after things in a general way?"

"Yes, *sir*. I'll go to bed as soon as you fellows have done drinking and got safe home. Must see you safe as far as your street."

"What hotel are you patronising, Willie?"

"La belle étoile. I sleep up there—round the 'Anna M'ria.' Cold tub every morning in the stream. Goo' business. Gentlemen and Englishmen like coletubearly; not like you d——d Yanks and Greasers. What?"

"I'm not going to quarrel now, Willie. So don't talk that dam foolishness."

"Qui' right. I never quarrel with a man when he's drunk. Can't control his feelings. Jack Dillon, you can't control your conversation. You're drunk, but I bear no malice. I'm goin' to bed. Corsar, you're a gentleman. Gladder met you. See you to-morrow; goo'night!"

And poor Willie Mackay, M.A., lurched off to some unseen lair in the surrounding country, which was hilly and well clothed with trees, and adapted for prompt disappearance.

Mr. Corsar walked back with Jack Dillon to the hotel. "What sort of a fellow is that?" he said.

"Dam fool in some respects. Got maggot in his head

about bein' a gentleman, but will do any d——d thing for a spree and whisky—except lie. He won't do that. I don't know why, as he'll do almost anything else in the guileful and deceptive way. You see, he'll salt that mine of ours lovely."

Mr. Corsar smiled a rather nasty smile as he heard the word "our."

"But I wish to h—— he wouldn't keep slinging "Jack Dillon" at me. I'm supposed to be dead long ago. Every one thought your friend Shute had put me out of my pain for ever, way down to Leadville. If they didn't think so I should have Smyrna city arising in the darkness and hoisting me on to a rope, and then practising with repeaters at my carcase. Yes. That's why I'm Max Heintz."

"Oh," said Mr. Corsar drily, as he looked at the mild fair little man, whose life had been a series of sportive and homicidal crimes. Then he added, "I see."

"There's no one I trust with my name—'cept, of course, the shaloots I've known in the old days. They've got to know me, whether I like it or not."

"Do I count as one of the shaloots?" asked Mr. Corsar, pleasantly.

"Well, yes. I should allow you did. But I told you my name because I could get something out of you, because I admired at your pluck, and because—well, one old sport can generally trust another. Each knows too much about the other."

"Oh. So they'd lynch you if they knew who you really were?"

"Why, yes. In most places."

"Dear me. Well, let us be getting home. It is late."

And Mr. Corsar reflected, "Now, should you become a nuisance, my dear friend, they *shall* lynch you."

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day the deputation met round the "Anna Maria," and were welcomed by Mr. William Mackay, now sober and subdued, and inclined to use rough and coercive language to the abandoned and cast-down-looking Greaser, who could not take alcohol with the same cheerful impunity as the Cambridge Master of Arts, who stood swearing, gently and sadly, at his work. When Mr. Joel Haycraft saw the cheap, rusty,

and obsolete-looking devices for crushing and washing, and the general aspect of desertion and despair which the "Anna Maria" (Ariadne of mines) bore, he sniffed scornfully, but made no remark.

Mr. Corsar was calm, pallid, and gentlemanly as ever.

The old stamp-mill was at work, and a stream had been diverted into a sort of trough, from which it gushed away, opaque, like many a Western stream, with the mud of man's greed, with sometimes the stain of his blood, and wandered away to where the great shimmering Pacific accepted mud and blood and gold and quartz, and was unchanged by them, like Time swallowing Life and Death and Hate and Love. In due time Willie Mackay showed Mr. Corsar something in his wet hands.

"Look here!" he said.

"Observe, gentlemen," said Mr. Corsar. "I asked you to come here and see whether facts bore out my words. Here is a small but perceptible quantity of yellow fact."

All looked into the palm of Mackay's hand.

"What's that?" Mackay said.

"Gold, as I'm a sinner!" said Mr. Potter.

"Gold, as he's a salter!" remarked Joel Haycraft, pointing at Mackay.

"What did you say?" said Mackay, coolly.

"I said you salted that mine," said Haycraft, equally coolly.

"Very good. I say you lie. Now, before you shoot, listen. I never salted a mine in my life, and I never will. I never lied. I defy any one to prove that I did. I get drunk and wear rags and make a fool of myself and get in rows—but I'm an English gentleman. Now I don't know what you are, but I ask you to come and personally and minutely inspect this crushing and washing, and if you find salt—shoot!"

"Sir, I will," said Joel. And he watched intently for an hour and a half. At the end of that time he stood up, held out his hand to Mackay, and said, "Sir, you are a square man. Shake hands." Then he walked over to Potter and said, "Mr. Potter, I owe you a thousand dollars."

"I wonder if he knows he is parodying Falstaff?" said Mackay to Corsar in an undertone.

"No, of course not. I say, there's no mistake about this gold?"

"Not a bit."

"Because that infernal shaloot, Jack Dillon," continued Mr. Corsar in a louder undertone, "tried to induce me to salt it, and share proceeds with him."

"Oh!" said Mackay. ("Good! He doesn't remember last night's conversation a bit," thought Mr. Corsar.) "Look out, they'll hear," continued Mackay. And he looked curiously at Mr. Corsar.

"There, gentlemen," said Mr. Corsar, "are you satisfied?"

"Sir, we are," said Joel Haycraft.

Mr. Corsar smiled, and felt that he was a man of destiny. "What an awful fluke!" he thought. And Mr. Corsar did several things. He wrote a short letter to Cyrus Shute, and he found some men whose relatives had been shot by Jack Dillon. To them he denounced Jack Dillon, and they did thereupon visit, capture, and presently hang Jack Dillon. And that was his end. And "Anna Maria" shares went up on "the Street."



## CHAPTER XXV.

### OUTSIDE THE ACADEMY.

MR. JOHN RAYNHAM and Carl Corsar presented themselves at the little office in Craven Yard, and the former was duly introduced to Mr. Clinch by the latter. Mr. Clinch was more inclined to "unbend" to Carl now—more familiar, less professional, though still very cautious not to put names to any of the heroes of his scandalous chronicles of London town. It being made clear to him that John Raynham was thoroughly in Carl's confidence, as well as the person perhaps, on the whole, most interested in the investigation of Colonel Cyrus Shute, he said to both the visitors, looking at Carl for hints as to procedure—

"Then p'raps I'd better report progress to both you gentlemen?" Carl nodded.

Mr. Clinch began by hospitably placing a bottle of whisky (from the green safe) and some cigars (from the same) before the party—including himself—which proceeding made John Raynham open his eyes to a view of "confidential agents" entirely opposed to the one he had learned by tradition, books, and gossip, as persons who find mysterious and useless "clues" in pursuit of which they drink gin in taverns and take frequent chèques for equally mysterious and useless "expenses." "However, it is quite possible," thought he, "that the traditional view is, nine cases out of ten, right, and that his is the lucky exception."

"I've read Mr. Raynham your letter of yesterday," said Carl.

Mr. Clinch's eyes twinkled. "That's all right. But I've found out one or two more things since I wrote that letter. After Shute had done dining with you, sir"—John Raynham stared—"an' Mr. Waller Raynham and Major Mackinnon"—

(John Raynham thought, "I suppose he knows that I have got an ivory-handled penknife in one waistcoat pocket, and a watch with a broken mainspring in the other, and how many vaccination marks I have") "he went to Smith's American Reading Rooms, near Charing Cross. A lot of Americans goes there to read the papers, and get letters and such. Anybody almost can go in there. Well, he read something there that regular fetched him, made him sit up and swear. I hadn't time to do more than catch the name of the paper as he put it down and left it on the table before he went out, and me after him. He took a cab to the Langham, and I took another. Went in to ask for letters. Walked down Regent Street, looking at the gells, passin' a remark here and there, until he got to Piccadilly Circus, Walked down Waterloo Place as far as first to the left past pit door of Criterion, up Haymarket, which we call Round the island, sir," (aside to Mr. Raynham) "Rogue's Walk some call it, and then went into the American bar and Café at the Criterion. There he read his letter, which was from a gentleman *you* know, sir," to Carl, who said—

"My father, I suppose?"

"Just so. From America, telling him things had gone wrong, and he'd better sell all that mine scrip he held at any price. Well, that ain't all. He writes a note with one of those stylograph pens—very useful things they are, too—to a broker in the city, to buy as much as ever he can. Well, thinks I, this is funny. What's he heard or seen to make him disbelieve that letter? Think his pal's lyin' to him? (Begging your pardon, Mr. Corsar, for the allusion—but business.) That newspaper. Right. Well, I went round this morning, as it was too late last night, I saw that American paper, and I found in it a paragraph, quoted from another paper, that gold had really been found in the 'Anna Maria' mine. Well, now, sir, that's funny, isn't it?"

"Very," said Carl, grimly.

"I'm hanged if I quite see the drift of this yet," said Mr. Raynham.

"Don't you, sir?" said Mr. Clinch, with beaming benevolence, and a happy smile in each eye. "Letter dated later than newspaper."

"Well, I do," said Carl, "and it's no use mincing the matter. It means that my venerable parent has beaten his own record in general sinfulness, for he is trying to swindle his own partner, his old friend of many years past, if people like Shute can be described as friends."

Mr. Raynham could find nothing better to say than "Dear me!" in a distressed tone.

Carl laughed grimly and said—

"What do you think Shute's next move will be, Clinch?"

"He'll buy up all the shares he can get first. Then he'll publish a copy of this paragraph from America in all the papers he can get to put it in; perhaps he'll pay for space and put it in as an advertisement in the rest, though advertisements don't pay like paragraphs. People believe a paragraph much sooner than an advertisement, though both might be done at the expense of the same party, with the same object; but people don't know that. That'll make the price of shares go up. Then he'll sell 'em. Done every day, that kind of thing."

"That's about it, I suppose," said Carl. "Well, now you see, Mr. Raynham, that unforeseen accident, in all probability, has put the element of genuineness into this intended plant, and Colonel Shute and another have acquired unexpectedly the right to call themselves honest men, after a fashion; a prospect which has so appalled them that they are going to do their best to swindle each other, as the opportunity of swindling the public to mutual advantage is gone. Pleasant family, aren't we?"

"Well, I am sure I am much obliged to you, Corsar, and to Mr. Clinch too, for saving my family from the designs of an unscrupulous sharper like this Shute. I think you must allow me, Mr. Clinch, to share with Mr. Corsar the contingent expense of this inquiry. I have been very much astonished at the things you have discovered, as well as at the way you have discovered them, and am more than grateful."

Shuffling with pocket-book, hurried transfer of £5 note to Mr. Clinch, signs, winks, low-voiced gratitude, Carl delicately looking out of window, well aware of it all, after which Mr. Clinch said—

"I suppose I'd better go on keeping an eye on him?"

"I suppose so," said Carl, vaguely.

"Yes, certainly," said John Raynham. "It's only right to follow it out. It's one's duty to the public, to one's family, and everything. It's my duty to the people I may have introduced this fellow to, in my stupid carelessness, to follow it out and expose him if possible."

"All right, sir. I've got a fellow sweeping a crossing outside the place where he lives in Blackfriars Road. He fetches cabs for him, and hears where he wants to drive to and tells the cabman. He posts his letters, too, very often t'other side of the street, and takes notes of all the addresses. I could put a man with a hansom to hang about opposite him and drive him about, but I don't think that's worth while. It's very easy to watch Colonel Shute, 'cos he don't know it or expect it. It's your respondents and co-respondents among the upper classes that are difficult to watch. They are artful. Give me a lot of trouble sometimes. It's no good, of course—only a question of time and money, but some of 'em are artful. Good morning, sir; good morning, Mr. Corsar." And Mr. Clinch was left to finish his cigar in solitude, at the Pembroke desk, until the green baize door admitted more clients with scandalous chronicles from the waiting-room.

Mr. Raynham and Carl had lunch at the Grand Hotel grill-room, after which the former went back to his brother's to collect a portmanteau and hat-box and drive to Waterloo *en route* for Watermouth, while the latter mounted a 'bus which took him up Chancery Lane to Holborn, where he got down and walked into Bloomsbury.

Some time afterwards, when John Raynham was safely seated in his train, with an afternoon paper in which he read exciting and warlike headings over meagre and peaceful paragraphs, Carl Corsar might have been seen meandering about the rooms of the Royal Academy, accompanied by a very pretty and cheerful-looking young lady, whom he addressed as Jenny, to whom he made original criticisms of the pictures, which did not that year fall short or exceed by much the usual level of depressing mediocrity, aimless cleverness of manipulation, and hopeless barrenness of idea. There were all the usual sketches from the East and from Venice, the inevitable buff-coated, curly-wigged skainsmates standing up amid much studio and Wardour Street rubbish to light pipes, to



drink beer, to empty pipes, to look into empty beer-cans, to read letters, &c. (It never occurred to any one to paint one of these worthies getting some one else to read a letter for him—that were far too original, not to say “realistic.”)

There were deadly portraits of unknown but inconceivably ugly people—men, women, and sticky, jam-complexioned infants. There was a glaring Cabinet Minister with a swelled face, and a surprised-looking bishop, “with,” as Carl pleasantly remarked, “every one of ’em on.”

There were more classic people doing nothing particular, among marbles, bronze, and leopard-skins, by various artists, than Carl or Jenny could count. There was a picture all fire and smoke, with several red coats and pith helmets fighting valourously with “countless natives” of somewhere. Neat, clean, dead man in foreground. Centre, wounded man being attended to by bearded, spectacled potato-bogle. Right, wounded man carried on stretcher by distressed red-coats and pith helmets. Left, whole thing apparently “cribbed” from *Cheek*, a short-titled, long-winded warlike melodrama, then very popular on account of the real Martini’s and real Gatling’s used on the stage.

There were several pictures of tall, slim gentlemen and ladies, in vaguely “eighteenth-century” costumes, doing nothing, or perhaps bowing, at vast distances from one another, in long passages, or large gardens. Also several old men in kilts, in fishermen’s Guernseys, in ragged fiddlers’ costume, in old sailors’ and soldiers’ ditto (labelled “The Old Story,” “Fighting out old Battles,” “Grandfather’s Medal,” “How Uncle Joe got his Wooden Leg,” “How Father lost his Left Eye,” &c.). It was generally the same old man, a very popular but intemperate old model, called George Blammock, who did the rounds as apostle, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon. But the public did not know that, and said, “Isn’t that a dear old man !”

And there were some four dozen pictures of taste and feeling, or sentiment, labelled, “Interrupted,” “The Old Ivy Gate,” “Through the Rye,” “Through the Wheat,” “Through the Poppies,” “Through the Vetches” (oats, maize, hemp, sweet-peas, nettles, potatoes, tomatoes, &c.), “Listening to the Mill-Wheel,” “Parted,” “Reconciled,” “Under the Beeches,” “Over the Cottage Gate,” “Under the Cottage Door,” “Down the Cottage Chimney,” &c.

So Carl and Jenny spent a very instructive hour and a half, and came out very hungry, into Piccadilly, to hear the newspaper man shouting hoarsely, "Pipor: Slaughter: Batall: Orrible Batall: pipor: Speshall!" in monotonous, punctuated shouts, on each side of the street. Carl bought a paper.

"What's it all about?" said Jenny.

"Wait a minute. Oh, I see. Very poor thing in telegrams this. Seems we haven't sent half enough men somewhere or other, and they've been rather cut up. Now we're going to send some more, in dribblets, to be served likewise. The —th Highlanders has been told to get ready, at Watermouth, for immediate embarcation. Let's see. I knew two men in that a little, Holroyd and Cameron."

"That's the place where you were staying, wasn't it?"

"Yes. Look, that's one of the —th Highlanders in the distance, coming. At least it's the same striped stuff. I don't know. Yes."

"Fine man, isn't he?" The Highlander approached.

"Yes. Hullo! Well, I'm——"

"Here we are," remarked Sandy, cheerfully; "looks like business, doesn't it? I'm off directly to join at Watermouth. I'm messing about on a few hours' leave. How are you, Miss Jenny?"

"Quite well, thank you, Mr. Maxwell."

"Going to stick to this, Sandy?" said Carl.

"Rather. Going to come back a Major-General. I've enlisted in my own name, too, by Jove. Don't see why not. Can't stay now. Good-bye, old man." They looked at each other and shook hands.

"Good-bye, Sandy." Sandy saluted Jenny gravely, and passed on.

"What do you think about this, Carl?"

"I think he's done the best thing he ever did in his life."

"Why?"

"Because it is a walk of life in which he will delight, and in which he will do his duty—a thing he never did before, but I believe will do now. That's why."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.

Now it happened at this period that Britain was blessed with a highly conscientious administration, who never took any course which political morality did not dictate. Morality was the platform on which they had gone into office and the lever they had used to turn their predecessors out. And a majority, highly moral collectively, very independent, not to say factiously faddish individually, backed them up. This was a truly delightful state of things. Only one or two highly eccentric members of the Opposition dared say that this morality was not a good thing in itself, and did not lead to the pleasure, security, or comfort, of anybody; and they were smiled on as privileged paradox-mongers, or railed on as obstructors. And whenever anything went wrong, we were told either that it was a legacy from the late Government, or that it would be immoral for it to go right. And all private liberty was interfered with on the same moral ground which dictated non-interference with public aggression.

The Government, backed by the faddists, fanatics, and Anti-Everything-Pleasant-League, became quite paternal—almost grand-maternal—in its care for the public, and discovered that no one was capable of taking care of himself, and that everything anyone had been in the habit of doing was all wrong. People who were capable of earning money had to give it up to support people who were not, and everybody's property was to belong to somebody else—principally because it did *not* belong to somebody else, and because somebody else belonged to the A. E. P. League (as above) and said it did. Everybody seemed to exchange his functions with somebody else. Bachelors had to pay for the education of their married neighbours' children, while steady-going, hard-working

parents had to nourish unknown someone else's bastards on rates. Sober people were not allowed to buy a glass of beer, because drunken people bought too many. The masses, to their extreme disgust, were educated, the result being that they learned to read the accidents and police-reports of the week on Sunday mornings and to pronounce such words as Southwark, Greenwich, Berwick, as spelt. The poor were found to live in overcrowded and beastly dwellings (naturally because they *were* poor), so they were turned out, their rookeries razed, and they driven to more overcrowding and filthier dwellings in other already occupied rookeries, while expensive dwellings were erected in which they could not live, but in which a small number of comparatively well-to-do people did live ; all this, probably, on the moral ground of giving to those who have and taking away from those who had not, which principle ran parallel in the highly conscientious administrative mind with that of taking from those who have (because they have it), and giving it to those who have not (because they haven't), only they did the one in the towns and the other in the country, and so became deservedly popular in both.

Things abroad were in an equally pleasant state. It was immoral to have wars, therefore undesirable to have an army, because an army tempted and tended to war, while at the same time it was absolutely necessary to have one, if only to keep the peace. So they split the difference and had an army insufficient to make war, and inefficient to keep peace. This pleased the patriotic tax-payer, who liked to see red coats and liked to read about them being killed in distant lands in the evening papers, but disliked paying for them, and was so highly moral that he could not supply them with trusses of hay that were not weighted with brickbats, and externally stinking, and that at a high contract price.

And when we did have a war we were so anxious not to kill the enemy (on moral grounds) that we let them kill our poor red-coated boys instead. And this brings us to the state of things with which we are in this chapter concerned.

Through some "legacy of the late government," or some covenant we were morally bound to carry out, and morally certain to play the fool over, and ultimately withdraw from, it had been deemed necessary to dispatch a small expedition to a



distant land with the object of relieving the moribund remains of another small expedition, which had been sent by the late government to gather *prestige*, and had stayed there gathering it and becoming decimated in the process, while the succeeding government were deliberating what to do for them. So they (the administration) got a vote of credit, for which nearly every one voted, except a few ministerialists who said the soldiers out there deserved no help or thanks, because the late administration had been immoral. The Opposition voted for it because they found it pleasanter to criticize some one else's mess than make themselves responsible for one of their own. The Irish abstained, because some papers about Ballybucket National School had been (or had not been, I forget which,) laid on the table.

The result, as described in John Raynham's afternoon paper, as he "ran down" from Waterloo in the 4.10 was that England "resounded with the din of preparation," and 10,000 men worked extra time at all the dockyards, by electric light, while about seventeen regiments contributed all their efficient men to make up five other regiments to a decent strength, and a large white ship was being laden with adulterated medicines and poisonous tinned provisions in Watermouth Harbour. In the dear dirty old streets of Watermouth itself, much "Allonging and marshonging" was going on, and everybody was a trifle drunker than usual this hot July weather. (The Government had waited till the climate had reached its lethal maximum in the Distant Land before they made up their minds to despatch the expedition, and then folded their hands and put their faith in pith helmets, chlorodyne and their own integrity.)

The British Lion ramped, and went about perspiring in scarlet clothes. The British Lion was patriotic and courageous but abnormally thirsty, and followed up the fine old precedent of getting drunk on the eve of important achievements. The B. L. also borrowed money with more than ordinary enthusiasm, and less than ordinary apology, from tearful maidservants, leaving them pledges of affection in return. On the parade-ground of the —th Highlanders, recruits in white jackets and tartan trews were being made to "Shutterr—rup!" "Orrd—errup!" by great, gaunt, red-moustached Celtic-tempered Sergeant Maclean, with his kilt and cane.

Private Alexander Maxwell very soon got through this process, as he knew it already, and spent much of his time in marching up and down at the barrack-gate in full uniform, with feather bonnet and fixed bayonet, on sentry-go. It was in this capacity that he was observed by Messrs. Holroyd and Cameron one day, as they walked out (Sandy coming smartly to a standstill at his box) with the view of calling on the Raynhams to say good-bye.

"What'll that mean?" said Cameron.

"Hard up, I suppose. We better not seem to recognise him. He'd like it better if we didn't, I fancy, and he was not a bad sort."

"All right. I say, Hollybush, he hasn't much chance of cutting you out now."

"Think not? I don't know." And they walked on.

"I say, Cameron."

"Well?"

"Don't mention this—there."

"No fear."

And they went to the Raynhams, and found Mrs. Raynham and her eldest daughter walking about in the garden with sunshades. Cameron talked to the girl and Holroyd to the mother, and they fell into a procession of two and two, which was great fun for Holroyd, of course, whose heart was shaking him all over with big throbs of anxiety to see May, so that he was only just capable of taking an intelligible share in Mrs. Raynham's conversation. He would probably have been still more stricken if he knew that May was that moment in her own room, occupied in kissing a note which the postman had brought from Sandy, asking her to meet him in a secluded part of the grounds that evening, at such time as the exigencies of his profession set him free. He did not tell her he was a soldier. He wished that fact to break on her as a *coup de théâtre*, that he might thereby gauge the depth of her affection. Perhaps Sandy's true field was that of diplomacy rather than war. At all events, the result was that May never came downstairs at all, till the visitors were gone, though they stayed an unconscionable time, and was not visible when Mrs. Raynham sent a servant for her. So poor Holroyd had to console himself with the promise that the whole family would witness the departure of the regiment, from a con-

venient position which Holroyd had provided for them in the town.

Mrs. Raynham agreed to this, but did not encourage Holroyd and Cameron too much. They were accustomed to be very much encouraged by her, and could not, of course, guess that her demeanour towards them could be altered by the presence in her mind's eye of a visionary American millionaire, who might propose to one of the girls, who must therefore be kept free of inferior entanglements. So Mrs. Raynham, being really fond of her children, and desirous of promoting their welfare, did not hold out too many hopes to Holroyd and Cameron, either of whom was worth, morally and pecuniarily, though not a man of exceptional endowments, countless Cyrus Shutes.

Later in the afternoon, in fact, just before dinner, Mr. Raynham came home, and was uncommunicative. Mrs. Raynham hovered round him and looked expectant, and he talked about the news in the paper. She asked fishing questions, and he feigned deafness, and went to get ready for dinner. In fact, he was thinking over what he had better say about Cyrus. There was no particular hurry at present, and he was hot and tired, and wanted to avoid a long and wearisome discussion, in which everything would be repeated over and over again by the two participants.

At dinner May was rather talkative, and seemed illuminated from within by some secret and sudden source of delight. So she was, and the source was Sandy's letter, in her pocket. She thought he had "come back," and that simple expression settled everything in her mind for the future. After dinner she put on a sailor's hat and threw a "cloud" round her neck, and disappeared (avoiding with dexterity the eyes of her relations, who were proceeding to take a leisurely "turn" in the avenue) into a piece of wood which led to a back entrance of the place from a not-much-used and narrow road. It was about as solitary a place as could have been chosen for an assignation, and May waited about, trembling with excitement, and thinking what a shame it was of Sandy to be so late—forgetting she was about ten minutes too soon—listening if any one else should be coming through the copse, and looking extremely pretty in a pale crisp summer dress.

And impatience led her to look over the five-bar gate on to the road, to see if any one was there. So she peeped slowly, like a cautious squirrel, round the corner of the tall hedge, and quickly drew back, having detected a soldier—a kilted soldier in a white jacket—approaching along the road. “Oh, dear,” she thought, “how dreadful if he has arranged to meet one of the maids here, and all four meet at the same time!” But no maid came, and May hid behind the hedge to let the soldier pass; and she heard a voice, that made her pulse jump, say, “May, is that you?”

Then she went to the gate and gave a little cry of “Oh!” as she saw that Sandy was the soldier. And while she was still under the paralysing influence of the *coup de théâtre*, the soldier had vaulted over the gate and held her in his arms. And she made no protest, even though her hat gently dropped back to the ground as her face turned up to look into his, with helpless and utter surrender in her eyes, as he bent his head down to kiss her.

“Sandy!” she murmured, and buried her face in the white jacket.

And he held her up with one strong arm round her waist and the other round her neck. And then he spoke:—

“Here I am again, you see, like the bad shilling of popular conversation.”

May smiled sadly and replied—

“Yes, but why is it the Queen’s shilling, Sandy?”

“They don’t give a shilling now. The authorities are much too economical. But are you glad to see me, my May?”

“Oh, Sandy! I’ve been wanting you so.” (More kissing.)

“Well, I wanted you, too, and I determined to see you somehow, and chance it.” (Kissing as before.)

“Will you get in a scrape if you’re found?” asked May (thinking of him), after a silent interval.

“Not a bit if I’m in at the proper time. I can stay here till 8.30. Then I must bolt,” replied Sandy (thinking of himself).

“Tell me all about yourself, Sandy; come and walk away here in the wood, where no one can see us if they come along the road.”

“Why? You’re not ashamed of my uniform?”



"No, of course not. Why should I? But don't you see I'll get in an awful row if I'm seen and talked about?"

"I beg your pardon, darling, I should have thought of that myself. Come along, we will be like the people in *As You Like It*."

And the two figures—of the girl in her summer dress, and the soldier in his dark kilt, and white jacket, and Glengarry—walked together under the trees, looking through the branches at the far-off fragments of sea and sky, still glowing yellow in the late summer light.

"Well," said Sandy, "I'm a soldier because I've got no more money, and want a profession where a poor man can remain a gentleman. It's suited to me in every way. I'm familiar with weapons and drill, I'm active and strong, I like a wandering life and hard exercise, and by-and-by I'll be a sergeant—won't take me long—and, perhaps, some day I'll have a commission. Lots of men do. At present I have to salute your friends, Holroyd and Cameron, which is rather fun."

"They might have told us. They were both here this afternoon. But Sandy, the Highlanders are going, some of them, to this war in Africa, or India, or wherever it is. I know, because they have to say good-bye, and we are to see them go."

"Yes, I know."

"But you won't have to go too?" And May stopped and clung to him, and looked up in his face.

"Of course I shall go too. It's my best chance of getting promotion, even if I had any choice. Well, it won't last long, and if I get a chance I'll do something or other to get up in the service, I promise you."

"Oh, but Sandy, I can't bear it! I can't bear it! To lose you again so soon, when I have just got you back. Must you go?"

"You wouldn't like me to shirk it?"

Tears, and kisses, and utter woe; then a sudden recovery: "No, Sandy, I would *not* like you to shirk it. But if you never come back—oh! what shall I do?"

"Don't think of unpleasant things like that. I shall come back all right, and have a medal or two pinned on for you to make brooches of." Silence.

"How I shall pray for you, and read the papers."

Touching, but grotesque, combination! Sandy looked at

this loving girl, who suspected nothing, trusted everything, and knew not, and dreamed not, of the orange-haired harlot, whose memory he cursed with all the bitterness of repentance; and all his intellectual swagger fell from him, as scales from life-blind eyes, and he saw himself at last as he really had been, and he said in a low, hoarse voice—

“May, my little girl, you love me more than I ever did or ever can deserve. You don’t know—I can’t tell you—what a worthless brute I’ve been.”

“I don’t care. And I don’t believe it. Oh, my own soldier, I shall always love you, whether you live or die, and always trust you.”

“I will try to deserve it.” And this time it was a real resolution, not written in water or sand. “May, look at that big, bright star, high up in the west, between those branches. We will make that our own star, and whenever I see it I shall give it a message for you, and you will know at night that I am on ship or on shore looking at it.”

The word “ship” brought May back to immediate facts. “When do you go?” she said.

“Day after to-morrow. You will see me with the rest of the regiment. We will say good-bye this evening. That’s what I came for. What time is it?”

May looked at her watch. “It’s twenty past eight. Shall I tell them up at the house about your being in the regiment?”

“No good. They’d only make a fruitless fuss, and I’ve given Mr. Raynham quite trouble enough already. May, I must cut away to Watermouth directly, or I shall be late in barracks.”

And May clung to him, and gave him one long kiss that neither he nor she ever will forget all their lives long, and said, “Oh, my love, my love!” in a low choked voice, “Good bye!”

And then he vaulted the gate again, and quickly walked away. And May stood watching him till he vanished.

A day or two later she saw him once again, when she and the rest of the family were standing in a first-floor bow-window in King Street, Watermouth, when the fifes came down the steep old street, playing “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” and the July sun shone on the long procession, rows on rows of sunburnt Scotsmen in heavy marching order,—Hol-

royd, and Cameron, and all—they looking stiff and grave, with their bright scarlet and steel-hilted broadswords catching the sunshine. And then, a little way off now, there came a sudden “skirl,” the march became slower, and behold pipers and drums had burst into “Auld Langsyne,” and the crowd in the street begin to sing in rough, half-crying, half-cheering tones, and the pipes skirled far above all the other sounds, and Sandy passed underneath in a row of four, with his haversack and overcoat, and multitudinous packages, and his Martini in his hand. And their eyes met. And then he was gone. May did not cry till she got home.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### COLONEL SHUTE FEELS UGLY.

COLONEL CYRUS SHUTE sat in his shirtsleeves on his bed, thinking. He was in his room in the Blackfriars Road, for which he paid four shillings and sixpence a-week, and where he was known as Mr. Anderson. On the table stood a bottle of whisky and a glass. And Cyrus cut a nice knobby "plug" from a hard black rock of tobacco, rather like a piece of asphalt, which he put in his mouth, and spat, after awhile, freely about the floor. And Cyrus moralised beautifully on the villany of one James Corsar, and decided that breach of contract between business partners was the prelude to commercial and general chaos. Cyrus took very strong views on dishonesty and deception.

"I shouldn'ter done it to him," he (rather rashly) asserted, "if I had bin there." Then he added, "Or if I had, I'd'er done it better," as a healthier afterthought.

"Now, James Corsar, Esquire, friend and former pardner, let's see how you and me stand. You've got the mine, the discovery, the American market, and the time ahead o' me. That'll count as a four. Then I've written to Smithers to buy every share in Great Britain, your letter, that cutting from the *Hio State Mail*, Raynham prospective matrimonial alliance, and your ignorance of my knowledge. That's a flush sequence, if you put it in the right order. Each of us knows something too much about the other for convenience. Seems to me it'll be a deuce of a row when it comes."

Then he thought out a programme, modifiable of course to any alteration circumstances might suggest.

First of all, he made up his mind that Mr. Corsar would want to buy up such English "Anna Maria" scrip as might be in existence, in order to sell it at a profit after due trumpeting of the recent gold-find. "Well," said Cyrus, "he



shall buy in. From me. At such a price as I can run 'em up to with this bit o' newspaper. Yes. There's a kinder justice about that. Now, he'll sell all his Amer'can shares in London, to make a fall to buy the English for next to nothing. He shall not make that fall. I'll buy every dam one, and sell it to him back at a rise. And the holy and elevating part is, that *he won't know who is selling them*. Not till I tell him. Guess stocks and shares is as easy to me as poker—and dam sight more fun."

Cyrus also determined to go down to Watermouth for the benevolent purpose of inviting May Raynham to become his wife, a proceeding he determined on quite as calmly as he did on having his hair cut. He was simply "hedging" against possible failure in his contest with Corsar.

So he got up, laid his plug of tobacco carefully on the mantelshelf, emptied the glass of whisky, which formed his simple breakfast, put his coat on, and hat, walked forth, hailed the first hansom, and drove to the Langham Hotel to ask for letters.

He found a telegram from Smithers, to the purpose that he had effected the desired transaction, but at a price that made Shute open his eyes.

"My stars! Some sharp's seen that Ohio paper! What a second-hand, one-mule fool I've been not to take it right home last night—and it wasn't a fresh mailed paper either. How'ever, Corsar 'll have to give all the higher price."

There was a letter for Cyrus, as well as the telegram, but from a different person, was short and excited his curiosity much. It ran thus:—

"SMITH'S PRIVATE HOTEL,

"WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD.

"SIR,—I should like an interview with you on the subject of the 'Anna Maria' mine and Mr. James Corsar. I have just come from there. I shall stay in all to-day, in case you should call.

"Yours faithfully,

"WILLIAM MACKAY."

"Now who's mine faithfully, William Mackay? I may have known fifty different kinds of shaloots of that name. I may have known him with some other name. But he knows something, or he wouldn't have talked about Corsar. I don't

understand this. It gets me. But I don't see that I'll hurt by going there. I'll go."

And he went, and found Smith's private hotel to be a peculiarly shady-looking coffee-tavern of the cheapest description. Cyrus went into the public room, which opened on the street, where a few working men were dining, and reading dirty, much-worn newspapers.

"Party of the name of Mackay anywhere round?" he said to the waiting-girl.

"Here, Colonel!" said a voice from one of the compartments, and Mr. William Mackay, M.A., arose, very much the same draggled specimen of humanity we last saw him, but sober, painfully, sadly sober.

"Where can we talk?" said Shute, who had seen too many queer people to be surprised at the appearance of one more.

"Come to my room." And Mackay led the way upstairs into a close little bedroom looking out on some leads, and adorned with ghastly coloured illustrations from one of the papers.

"You must excuse this shanty, but it's the best I can afford. I've got some whisky here of my own I brought from over there. Nursed it like a baby all the way, and never drew the cork once. Here it is. Help yourself. Now you want to know who the devil I am, don't you?"

"That is so."

"Well, you can see I'm not one of the brilliantly successful. You can do without my general biography, I daresay, as long as I begin where you can take an interest. Well, I'm a sort of loafer, who's tried mining, grazing, cards, and whisky and most things, and stuck to none. I'm an Englishman by birth, and cursed with what people call a "love of adventure," or "roving instinct," in my youth. I didn't yearn for a seafaring life, was not quite such an utter idiot as that, but I read stories about Texas, and California, and Australia, and the Spanish Main, and Timbuctoo, and the Devil's Elbow, and got to long to sport around in those earthly paradises. Well, I did and have. I went there with a competence, out West I mean, and have been a tattered scarecrow ever since. And I think the roving instinct is the d—dest folly out, and America (with the exception of England) the sickest country in existence. Take another whisky. Well, now, business.

I have been working, with my hands I mean, at that rotten old fraud called the 'Anna Maria.'"

"Oh."

"I find that you are sort of running that show over here, never mind how, just at present. Well, one James Corsar was running it over there, anyhow, and he got into a scrape. Some one wanted to see mine at work. Didn't believe in it. Thought it and Corsar a fraud."

"Smart man, that."

"Corsar didn't know what on earth to do. Cheeked it out, of course, as he would do. Then he got up a partnership with my old acquaintance, Jack Dillon."

"Now, steady! Jack Dillon went to claim that golden harp they were keeping ready for him a whole year back. I have special reasons for knowing that. He is bluffing to a select circle of angels about now."

"Yes. You thought you shot him dead in Leadville, I know. But you didn't."

"He was buried."

"Yes. But he rose again, and took a German name, and kept a store at Carmel, near Smyrna City, O. You see the place was too hot to hold him in the genuine Jack Dillon form. There were too many vengeful brothers and husbands, and fathers and other relatives, of the numerous victims of his playful disposition."

"Great the mortality incident on that lightness and freedom."

"So he changed his identity. Well, he and Corsar arranged to split profits and salt the 'Anna Maria,' and Jack, knowing I was a poor devil in rags, who'd do most things for whisky, engaged me, as an act of kindness to an old pal, and I engaged a Greaser to assist. What we were to do was to get something resembling externally a working and workable mine under way, before the crowd came, at Corsar's request, to inspect it. Well, we took a jolly lot of trouble, Jack and I, and did arrange a rotten old stamp affair, and a wash, somehow. I didn't mind. Jack promised me a decent share, and I knew I could trust him."

"And of course you both put a childlike faith in Corsar? Well, I don't blame you. I did it too. Go on. Reel out the story."

"To my immense astonishment I found gold."

"The devil you say!"

"I did. And knowing that they meant salting, a thing I dislike doing, having some remnants of a conscience, I told Corsar of my discovery, in all good faith, to save salting."

"You told him? My stars, you were right in saying Providence never intended you for a success in life. Why didn't you let Corsar salt and pocket the gold yourself?" asked Shute, with the most natural surprise.

"Because, Colonel Shute, although I'm a ragged black-guard in your eyes, I'm an English gentleman in my own."

And there was a dignity about this man, as he stood up, dirty, unshaven, underfed and gaunt, to say that, which made Cyrus nod silently, and say—"All right, sir. No offence. Drive ahead. The next thing that happened was that Corsar gave you both away?"

"The idea was that Jack Dillon was to take an equal share of the profits with him, and both were to contribute a fair wage to me. Corsar thought, from a conversation with me, that I was too drunk to remember things he had said already, and came the honourable and gentlemanly game with me, and said (after the gold-find) that Jack had tried to induce him to salt, dealing with the unfamiliar expression in a playful outsider's way, as if he hardly appreciated the full enormity of the transaction it implied. Lord! It's hot to-day, and its ten days since I touched real Bourbon. Here's your health, Colonel."

"Sir, to you."

"When Corsar began to empty that sort of hogwash into my simple ear, I assumed a Brutus-like stupidity."

"Who's he?"

"Ancient party—classic. It's a long thing to go into as a mere parenthesis; but he pretended to be stupid and wasn't."

"All right. Ripple along with the story."

"I felt moderately sure that Corsar was up to some sinful game, and I talked to Jack about it, who allowed—that is to say, asserted—that I was right, and we agreed that I should keep up the drunk stupid swaggering style, and watch our gentleman. I drank pretty free, but always went on as if I



was several times drunker than I really was, as long as he stayed at Morgan Town."

"Yes, I know Morgan Town."

"But before I knew what he was up to, except that he had a partner in England, which was you——"

"Did he tell you that?"

"No fear. He wrote a letter to you. I read the blotting-paper in a looking-glass. These clever men always forget some silly detail like that. Well, before I knew he'd gone and done about the snipiest thing a man could, he found out some people who had a grudge against Jack—he'd killed their relations or something, at a previous period, and these people went out riding on horses one night and just hung up Jack Dillon. Well, I don't say he hadn't deserved it, but he was a good friend of mine, and it was a mean way of getting rid of him. He might have had a quarrel and shot him, only he knew precious well that Jack would have had something to say there too. Then I lay low, thinking he'd knife me in the dark or something, as his only object was to get rid of people who knew too much. He tried one day to shove me down an elevator-shaft at Smyrna when he thought I was drunk, but finding it didn't come off he held me up, and pretended to save my life. Well, I've clung to that man like a barnacle since then, and knowing he was swindling you, to say nothing of me, as he expressed ignorance of your whereabouts and wrote you letters in the course of the same week, I wanted to talk to you. He's a little too sharp at present for me by myself, and I thought you might put in to the same pool with me. I have heard a good bit about you in one place and another, though I've never seen you before, and I thought you were a competent man to deal with this affair in many respects. I don't care much how far I go in this particular case. See?"

"Shake hands, sir!" said Cyrus. "Mr. Mackay, you've been in my country enough to know things. You can guess what sort of a chap I am pretty well, I take it?"

"You bet."

"Well, you've done the square thing by me. I'm a sport, and a rowdy, and all that, and live freely on the immortal verdure with which Great Britain is clad, and so I tell you. But before I did a thing such as *he's* done, by G——, I'd turn respectable! Now, will you shake hands?"

"I will."

"Now, I'll tell you. I have begun the war. I have bought all the shares in England nearly in that d—d mine."

"Didn't you have to give higher cover than you expected?"

"How?"

"Weren't they gone up?"

"Some."

"Do you know who sold 'em to you?" Shute started.

"Who, anyway?"

"James Corsar." Colonel Shute was eloquently silent for a few minutes, and his eyes looked wicked and his chin went forward. "Oh, damnation!" he observed at length. "Where is he?"

"That's the worst of it. I came in the steerage of his ship, but in London I lost him through not having money enough to pay for conveyances."

"Oh, we'll find him! There'll be trouble about this."

"Miching Mallecho all round."

"I don't know him."

"Never mind. Have some more whisky."

"No, I thank you. Here, pard, you'll want some grub, and some clothes and some drink, won't you?"

"Look as if I did, don't I?" said the graduate gloomily.

"Here!"

"Thanks. I'll pay you when I can."

"All right. It ain't got by the sweat of my brow, so you needn't mind takin' it. Poor world if one old sport couldn't help another. Besides, I'll want you most likely, later, to help this business through."

"We've got a man against us who's got his wits about him, who doesn't draw the line at anything—anything, mind,—whose accumulated a lot of money, by this time, and who lives we don't know where."

"Oh, yes we do. Leastways, it won't be difficult to find him. He won't hide. He don't know you're in England?"

"No, I'm pretty sure of that."

"But he knows I am, though he don't know that I have any reason for making a fuss. He'll meet me in the cordial, old friend style, and be forthcoming when looked for, you bet. I know him. Now let's see what there is against him, and if we can prove it. No good going into a row with an

empty pistol. How about his intention of fraud in that 'Anna Maria'?"

"Not good enough. Hearsay evidence, real gold found there, and so on. Other man dead, and bore bad character, therefore likely to lie. That's the defence he'd make."

"How about attempt to murder you?"

"No motive for jury. Law bless you, I know juries! I seen 'em in America, and flummoxed 'em in England. They wouldn't believe it. Much more likely to believe I tried to murder him. Besides, my character, in cross-examination, oh my! I wish I had the cross-examination of myself. I'd amuse the jury."

"Seems to me that James Corsar's going to turn out without a stain upon his character! Let's think it over." And Cyrus Shute pondered silently, in great wrath at having been "given away," but with his brains working at higher speed in consequence, even as an engine may when the fire is poked. Suddenly he made an exclamation,—“Sakes alive! And I nearly forgot that!”

"Well?"

"Look here, that 'Anna Maria's' mine."

"What about that 'Anna Maria' mine?"

"I say its *mine*. It belongs to me, and to no other person."

"How about the company and the shares, and the prospectus?"

"Company be d—d and shares, too! There isn't a company, and never was. I bought the ground myself, and can prove it, and I never gave it or sold it to anybody. Can he see me?"

"You've been publicly recognising the existence of this company, haven't you? He sees you there."

"I go one hundred better. I've always depreciated that company, and pointed the finger of suspicion at it. That made people think it was a snug thing I was keeping to myself. So they bought shares. But it ain't my fault what they think. I say there *never was* any straight company with a straight title to that mine, and I produce my proof that I bought that bit of ground, claim, or what you like to call it."

"That's better. Well?"

“Then I call him.”

Cyrus commenced operations. First he wrote a calm, benevolent, and rather patronizing letter to John Raynham, offering to marry May. This he received back by return of post, torn in two. This, as he remarked to Mr. Mackay, in a public bar, made him “feel ugly.” It certainly did not make him look pretty.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MR. CORSAR SETTLES DOWN AND TAKES A REST.

MR. CORSAR sat in his old Jermyn Street lodging, much as he had sat some six or eight weeks before, in the swivel chair. But he looked out on the sunshine now instead of the fog. He had come back there quite naturally, to the great delight of the proprietors, who were really very fond of him, and had kept his two rooms carefully dusted and empty for his return. He was expected back, of course. He had left books, and clothes, and other odds and ends of his own there, and had merely stated that he was going abroad for a time. So that when he came back, sunburnt and smiling, radiating benevolence from a hansom cab, with a portmanteau, a great coat, and umbrella and stick strapped together, they were pleased, but not at all surprised to see him. He greeted his landlady very kindly, asked after everybody and everything in the house, gave her a little present—a stalactite, or a photo of a waterfall, or something for herself—one or two very fine cigars for her husband, who acted as a waiter, and a bit of real gold ore “for the children to play with.” Of course, the children were not allowed to touch it, and it was put on a mantelpiece, on a little mat; but that Mr. Corsar did not know.

“Good morning, Mrs. Whebling,” he said. “You see I’ve come back.”

Here he descended and carried in the portmanteau.

“And heartily welcome, and not a minute too soon, sir, I’m sure. The place ’ave looked quite empty without you. It’s only yesterday Whebling was saying he wondered wherever you’d a got to. So you’ve been in foreign parts, sir?”

Mr. Corsar paid the cabman.

“Yes, Mrs. Whebling, I’ve been a long way this time. I’ve been to America.”

“ ‘Ave you now, sir? Well, I ’ope you’ve kep’ your ’ealth, sir, which is *the* thing after all, ain’t it, now ? ”

“ Yes. Health is a great blessing.”

“ But you’re looking as well as can be.”

“ Thank you, yes. I’m very well, very well indeed.”

“ I went out and got a nice couple a chops, sir, the very minute I got your letter this morning. I shall ’ave ’em ready as soon as ever Whebling ’ave laid the cloth, and you’ve just made yourself atomagen, as it were. Yes, sir. Not knowing exactly when to expect you, I thought I’d better not put ’em on, not till you come. Chops hotted up is poor sort of stuff. Yes, sir.”

Mr. Corsar went up to his sitting-room. Everything was in beautiful order, just as he had left it, from his writing-table, with the fossil ammonite, split and polished, for a paper-weight, to the grisly old portraits of Nobody, which Whebling had picked up at auctions, to make the room look respectable and suggestive of baronial halls. “ Now I think I shall settle down,” he mused, “ and take a rest.” You see he was now very comfortably off. He had done a good deal of venturesome gaming, both in Wall Street and in London, and had the luck on his side, as usual. He no longer held any shares at all in the “ Anna Maria.” He had done better : he had sold them at a large profit, and since that doubled the money. Now he proposed investing in something safe and permanent, and taking a rest.

In other words, the fitful fever of his life was beginning to tire Mr. Corsar. He felt that he had gone through a good deal, that he was no longer as young as he was, and that he was now sufficiently well-off to make honesty—what it had hitherto not been for him—the best policy. Respectable, in the highest degree, he had always been. So, after a few days, he sat at home reading the paper, quite oblivious of any incidents in his life which some in his place might have been ashamed of, and rapidly transforming himself into the leisurely and excellent old gentleman he had planned to become—a gentleman of the old school. He drank port in moderation, after dinner at the club, was benign to every one, as usual, and liked and respected by all who knew him.

One trace of the old life and nature remained. He never subscribed to anything, and he never gave to any form of

"charity." That was a depth of folly to which he could *not* descend. He had not made money with great labour and risk at his time of life to waste it on other people. He put in an occasional appearance at some highly respectable church in the vicinity on a Sunday morning, giving the preference to the Chapels Royal. He made a highly orthodox will, leaving all the property of which he might be, or become, possessed to his beloved only son, Carl.

"It can't matter to me who gets it when I'm gone, but it's the regular thing to do, and that solicitor, and Whebling who witnessed, will go and gossip about it. And I don't know any one I'd like better to have it than Carl. He used to be a jolly little boy—and she was a pretty woman too—and *such* a fool! I wonder if I ever was considered a jolly little boy? Dear me, what a biography I could write! I've a good mind to write it, and bequeath it to the nation for some fellow to edit when I'm dead, and then they'll find out, as they always do when a man's private papers are published, how entirely wrong their opinions of me were. I might write two, of totally different kinds—no, it's fatiguing to invent, especially when the reality might be made so interesting. What a beautiful day! I think I'll go and potter in the park a little before lunch. Come in. Well, Whebling, what is it?"

"Gentleman for you, sir. Colonel Shute."

"Oh, show him in. How do, Shute? Thought you'd turn up sooner or later."

"Did you, now? Well, I'm here. I've come to talk business."

"Very well. Won't you sit down?"

"Well, no, I thank you. I will stand."

"Will you have a drink?"

"Well, no, I thank you. I will not."

"And what's your news?"

"It's yours I want."

"Oh, ah! about that mine? Well, yes. I don't think I can add much to what I said in my note to you. I ascertained that it was no good, and devoted my attention to other speculations. I told you that sort of thing would never do nowadays. People are sick of throwing money down mines."

"Yes. But are they sick of takin' gold out of 'em?"

"Well, scarcely. I don't suppose they ever will be till

some alchemist upsets the market by transmuting metals. Why?"

"Oh, nothin'. Only I heard a rumour—at least, I read in a paper—that gold had been got at last out of the 'Anna Maria.' In an American paper."

"Indeed! What paper?"

"Clipping from *Morgan Town Argus*, arriving per *Smyrna Democrat* into the *Ohio State Mail*, read by me at the American Exchange—shortly before the receipt of your note."

"Of course you didn't believe it?"

"Of course not. I thought you'd put it in, till I got your letter. Then I found it was true. And I found my partner was layin' out to cheat me out of my property."

"Well, but that's nonsense, Shute. There isn't any property worth cheating anybody out of."

"No. And there ain't any shares in the mine. And you didn't buy 'em over there, and over here, and sell 'em at a rise. And I didn't buy the claim myself 'fore I came over to Europe, and I didn't write you to go shares. And you and Jack Dillon didn't arrange to salt the mine, and a deputation from Smyrna city didn't go over to see it work, and you didn't give up Jack to a vigilance committee, or sheriff, or somethin'. And maybe you didn't try to shove Willie Mackay down an elevator. Corsar, this is all too thin," went on Cyrus, changing his facetious drawl for a more direct and energetic tone. "I don't care a curse what you did to shaloots like Dillon and so on, but it's a steep thing to try and go back on me. I want ha'f profits. I might claim the lot, because the thing's mine after all. But I want ha'f, and I'll have it. Do you see me?"

"I see you and go better," said Mr. Corsar, all the old rogue's power and spirit re-arisen. "You won't get it. Not a quarter. Not a penny. And if you annoy me about it, I'll publish your real character, and simply shut the door of this house and of English society in your face. Do you think I spare one man who stands in my way more than another? Or that I care for threats? My dear sir, I totally deny all your story. There never was any such person as Jack Dillon or Mackay to my knowledge. Your paragraph from an obscure journal in a western mining camp is worthless, or talked of some person with the same name, a mere coincidence. I have been taken in by you and lost money over your bogus mine,



your pathetic and plausible stories imposing on my good feelings, and so on. Regret that I introduced you to friends of mine. All this only if you prove a nuisance. So you'd better disappear. There's plenty of greenhorns left for you to work on, but I'm not one of them. Do you see me?"

"I go better. Mackay is here in London."

"If you have a friend called Mackay who has a grievance against me, pray put him in the witness-box. Take care he's sober at the time. I think there would be rather an amusing scene. Especially when I put *you* in the witness-box, as of course I should. Hadn't you better throw up your hand?"

Cyrus Shute's eyes blazed, and the long and marvellously suppressed real wrath of the man came out.

"I CALL YOU!" he said, and fired his Deringer straight into James Corsar's brain. And James Corsar said no word, but collapsed in the swivel-chair.

Cyrus Shute re-pocketed the pistol, walked calmly downstairs and out of the house, turned down the Haymarket, and walked towards Westminster. When he reached the bridge, he leaned on the parapet to look at the view. When he observed no one passing, he dropped the little pistol into the Thames.

And so Mr. Corsar settled down to take a rest.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MY POOR DAD!

CARL CORSAR and Jenny were sitting after tea in a quiet and highly domestic way, in that cheerful ground-floor sitting-room of his in the quiet no-thoroughfare which led towards the Thames, on the evening of this eventful day, and had decided, as usual, not to encourage the hoarse bawlers of "MurdOR! Pypor! Orruble Mur—DOR!" by buying an evening paper. If they had, Carl would have learned a little sooner what had happened that afternoon in Jermyn Street. As it was, he lounged very comfortably in a big basket chair, with a pipe in his mouth, and talked lazily, while Jenny made alterations and repairs in her hat.

Jenny often dropped in to tea in this way, there usually occurring some amusing or instructive evening afterwards. Perhaps Carl read aloud to her, a thing they both enjoyed, maddening as it is to some people, or "explained things." Perhaps they might go to a theatre, or for a walk by the Serpentine, if it were a fine evening, and finally Jenny would be put into a 'bus and sent to her own abode—a place Carl had discovered, where was a very exceptional and highly desirable old landlady, who had been housekeeper to a family in Scotland, and had a granddaughter who played the harmonium at the Presbyterian conventicle frequented by her grandmother. What was more important was that the grandmother was an honest, kindhearted, cleanly old Scotch gentlewoman, with beautiful white hair and a handsome face, a rare kind of landlady to find in London. And she had a cottage piano her granddaughter practised on, and while the girl was out of an afternoon on messages or shopping, Jenny played Scotch tunes to the grandmother, and sang "Annie Laurie"

and "John Anderson" to her, so that the old lady loved her, and said she made the dark days bright.

"So you see, Carl, I'm some use after all."

"That's very gratifying. But don't get the impression that you have been otherwise than useful. The state of thorough reform you have inaugurated in my wardrobe, the presence of an abnormal growth of buttons on my various articles of underclothing, the flowers in that jug on the mantelpiece, the highly æsthetic kettle-holder, supplying the place of a crumpled bit of brown paper, all bear silent testimony."

"Do you know, Carl, I've found out a curious thing. Old Mrs. Maclean" (said landlady) "has a son who is a sergeant in the —th Highlanders, the regiment Sandy Maxwell's in, that went to this war, you know."

"Has she, by Jove! That's funny."

"And I read the papers to her to see if there is anything about him. But there isn't yet."

"No news is the best news in such a case."

"And Carl, when they come back, where will they land?"

"At Watermouth, I should think."

"Oh. Well, if it is all right, if nothing happens to him, you know, I want you to take her and me there to see them come back. I know she would like it better than anything in the world, but I haven't said anything to her on the subject. I thought I'd ask you first. Can we do it?"

"All right. I don't see why we shouldn't. It's a very good idea of yours, Jenny."

"May I tell her?"

"By all means. Hope Sergeant Maclean will come back a major-general at least. Poor old Sandy, I wonder how he likes it!" Here there came a ring and knock at the front door. Carl darted his head out of the open window. "It's Clinch," he said. "I'll go and let him in." And he went to the door. "Come in, Clinch."

Mr. Clinch looked unusually grave. "Good evening, missy," he said to Jenny. "Have you heard, sir?"

"Heard? No, nothing particular."

"Then I'd like to speak to you for a minute, outside."

They went out into the passage. "Well?" said Carl.

"Mr. Corsar has been back in London a few days."

"Has he, indeed!" exclaimed Carl.

"And Colonel Shute went to see him to-day. And they had a row. And it seems Colonel Shute shot him."

Carl looked grave and turned rather pale.

"Is he dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where?"

"His old lodgings in Jermyn Street."

"Where's Shute?"

"My man's watching him, and won't let him leave the country."

"Come. I'll go there—to Jermyn Street, and you can tell me as we go along. Wait a minute." And Carl went back to get his hat and said, "Wait here, please, Jenny, till I come back or send a message. I sha'n't be long."

"Oh, Carl, what is the matter?"

"My father is dead."

The two men got into a hansom and drove away.

"It's this way, sir," said Mr. Clinch. "My man generally watches Shute in the day-time, while I'm at the office, and I do the night-work myself. A day or two ago a chap called Mackay came over from America, who seemed to have had something to do with the deceased over there, and to have a grudge against him. And Shute got to know this chap, and they used to meet at Mackay's place, a coffee-house in the Westminster Bridge Road. Mackay might have told him one or two things he—Shute—didn't know, which might have increased his feeling against the deceased."

"Yes, yes; I understand." (Mr. Clinch always said "the deceased," "the prisoner," "the witness," in the regular police court and inquest style.)

"So this morning Shute goes round to Jermyn Street to see the deceased. My man followed him, and waited about for him to come out. When he came out he went down to Westminster, and on the Bridge he dropped a pistol into the river, he (witness) saw him do it. Then he went down Westminster Bridge Road, and saw Mackay, and they went into a pub. My man went in too, and listened. He didn't hear everything, but he heard Mackay say, "Did he throw up his hand?" and the other said, "No. But he passed in his checks." Then Mackay made a face, and said, "Where are you going?" Shute said he was going home, going to stay in London. And



they had some more talk that don't signify. Shute's now at his lodgings in Blackfriars Road. When I went to relieve my man I'd read the murder in the afternoon paper, and saw that it was attributed to Shute, because no one else was known to have been there, and because the people in the house heard the shot before Shute had been heard to shut the front-door behind him. Of course they hadn't the wits to stop him. That is as well, as we've got more evidence by letting him alone. Before I told the police anything I wanted to ask you what you wished done? Shute can get clear away, the chances are, or get lagged, just as you and we choose."

Mr. Clinch was a very cool customer, you see, and was accustomed to family differences.

"I've left my man down there, and came as quick as I could to let you know."

"You've done very well indeed, Clinch."

And Carl thought it over. Should Shute be allowed to go, and take his chance of escaping the law? Or should he be arrested? It is embarrassing to have the power of life and death placed suddenly in one's hands. There could be no doubt, Carl knew too well, that his father had behaved in the most treacherous manner to Shute, and had probably given great provocation, and that to a man who had been trained in a rough school to regard homicide as a kind of lawful retaliation. And the evidence would bring out many painful facts about his father's life. On the other hand, the dead man was his father, who, although his life had been what it was, had done him a kindness now and then, in ways that are remembered best when the doer can do no more of them, and he had been killed, either in a struggle or by direct assassination.

"Clinch, it'll be a painful business, the clearing up of the whole case. But we *must* arrest him. It's not the square thing to let him go."

"All right, sir."

They found the body of James Corsar on his bed, dead-white like marble; all the lines and contractions wrought by a life of cruel craft and ruthless wrong blotted out from a face now beautiful and full of repose. It was a wonderful change. Carl knew that it was simply due to the relaxed tonicity of certain muscles, but it still struck him with wonder

and awe. No science, no mockery, no democracy, no unbelief, no philosophy, can take away the majesty of king death, whose right is eternally divine.

All the man's life had been that of a wolf, whose trail was strewn with the lambs he had torn, and the lesser wolves he had fought with and overcome, till he fell in that track he had made his own.

And yet Mrs. Whebling was sitting in a corner crying. And yet Carl kissed that splendid calm marble face.

"My poor dad!" he said.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Clinch was in the sitting-room when Carl came back. "Better have a look at his papers, sir, hadn't you?"

Carl looked. There was not a scrap, not a document, not a letter except trivial invitations, bills, a newspaper or two—and the Will. There was a memorandum of a solicitor's address, and a little loose money. Carl looked at the will, and opened his eyes.

"Now, Clinch, I'm off. You go and do your work. You know best what steps to take. You know where to find me."

"All right, sir."

Carl drove back to Somerset Street.

"Is it true, Carl?" said Jenny, who had just read about the murder in the evening paper.

"Yes. And, Jenny—come and kiss me—I'm a rich man—comparatively."

"Oh, Carl!"

"And we must forget all that his life has been now, Jenny. I remember long ago, when he once bought me a little wooden horse on wheels, which I have somewhere still. And he has left all he has to me, his son—so that now, my Jenny, my dear love, who have never forsaken or forgotten me in the dark times—it is light now! And he has done that great thing for us. So we will remember him—kindly—whatever people say, while we walk earth—you and I together."

\* \* \* \* \*

Cyrus Shute had the pleasure of seeing a bill posted at all the police stations announcing a reward for his apprehension; but that caused him little alarm. He knew that London was the best place in the world to remain *incognito* in. He simply ceased to visit the hotel for letters. He did not go about with

a burdened conscience, or see bloodstains in the sky, or hear voices in the night, or pursuing steps behind him, or suffer any of the orthodox haunting horrors of a murderer. He simply felt placidly conscious of a virtuous action, and would have been surprised if any one who knew the facts had taken an opposite view. He took his meals, his whisky and tobacco, regularly. The only thing that embarrassed him was his inability to sell the mine shares he had bought. He knew the prices were rising, the papers tantalized him with that intelligence daily, but he could not give directions to sell without giving an address, which might lead to his apprehension.

So he came to the conclusion that he had better go to America while he had money enough to pay the passage, and do his best to "run" the "Anna Maria" over there. And then he received a note from Mackay, addressed to Mr. Anderson, at the Blackfriars Road lodging, which accelerated his departure. It was this—"I have had a subpoena served on me. Vamoose the ranch." Cyrus went to Euston and just managed to get the train to Liverpool. At Lime Street Station in that city he was stopped and arrested on the charge of murdering James Corsar. The detective-inspector who was dashing to Euston after him in a cab had just missed the train Cyrus caught, so he telegraphed to all the stations along the line, as a matter of course, and the Liverpool police completed the affair.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### CARL THE SELF-CENTRED.

SEVERAL months passed. Mr. Corsar had been buried, and Cyrus Shute likewise, and both forgotten by the public.

The military expedition to a distant land had performed prodigies of valour, gone through great hardships, suffered great mortality (principally through rashly eating the tinned supplies of the commissariat), had occupied various places, received orders to unoccupy and reoccupy them, and finally received orders to come home again. What they exactly had accomplished nobody exactly knew, but every one agreed that their behaviour had been most creditable. The great thing was to praise the army, as a flank attack way of blaming the Government. Everybody who had roared patriotically for war before it took place, now hooted the ministry for making it, and cheered the soldiery for doing the same.

In Parliament, very much the same ignorant and contradictory nonsense was talked, as was talked and sung and written outside. Some said that the Government had no business to go to war at all, but having done it, the only atonement open to them was to snub the army and refuse a vote of thanks. Others said they had not gone far enough, that instead of annexing (as a matter of course) about half a continent, which did not belong to them, they had patched up a humiliating peace. "Patched up" was the expression. Members of Parliament could not be expected to use straightforward and brief phrases when they could use long-winded bits of leading-article declamation. Then these glorious old and new bulwarks of British eloquence became conspicuous :—

The thin edge of the wedge.

Un-English.



A red herring dragged across the scent.  
Meddling and muddling.

“Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,  
But why did you kick me down stairs?”

“Within measurable distance of”——anything the speaker thought proper.

Peace where there is no peace.

Peace at any price.

The great traditions of this vast empire.

A degraded and bombastic imperialism.

The dictates of the Caucasus.

Jingoism, &c., &c.

And everybody found out what everybody else had said on a totally different situation many years before, when most of those now on the one side had been on the other; and the air was thick with hurtling quotations and “glaring” inconsistencies. In the meantime, the army—all that was left of it—was expected home, and preparation and expectation filled the hands and minds of Watermouth, where the troopships were to disembark.

May Raynham had passed a very anxious time—like a good many other people, who had to scan the papers in daily dread of meeting the name of one dear to them in some fatal list. And the telegrams seemed framed for the express purpose of causing suspense and terror to English families. For instance, May read this one day: “Wounded (severely) —th Highlanders, Private Martell (? Morwell), 10,341.” Now a thing of this kind inflicts torture worse than actual bad news. And a few days later the name became Mangle, 40,501; so that another family was “placed,” as the papers say, “in a state of suspense.”

At last, however, an item of news appeared which made May’s pupils dilate, as she read the paper in the privacy of her room before any one else could get hold of it. This was to the effect that Sergeant Alexander Maxwell had been recommended for the V.C., for conspicuous gallantry in carrying Captain Holroyd when wounded into shelter, getting wounded himself in the process, and that one Sergeant-Major Maclean was recommended for the same honour for standing over Captain Holroyd and Sergeant Maxwell when both were

disabled, and defending them against considerable odds till assistance arrived. It was added that Sergeant Maxwell was progressing favourably, while Captain Holroyd had since died. "Oh! And how easily it might have been the other way," thought May. And she prayed God to send her Sandy safe home.

At length the day arrived when the troopship, bearing the —th Highlanders, a portion of a cavalry regiment, and some Engineers, was to disembark them at Watermouth, and the Raynhams were to have the same window from which they had previously witnessed the departure one hot July afternoon. It was now November—a still, cold, dull day, on which people who had them went out in sealskins. In the morning, Mr. John Raynham received a private and confidential visit from Carl Corsar, for whom he had by this time conceived a great respect. And Carl announced the following curious project.

"I suppose, Mr. Raynham, that Sandy comes home about as well off as he started? I mean that the pay, or pension, or whatever it is he'll get, are worth nothing to speak of?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Well, you know, it's occurred to me that it isn't quite on the platform for me to keep and enjoy all the money my late father made. I can't help thinking of the way he made it, and that somebody was made poor every time he became more rich, and that by means other than fair competition. And it seems only square that somebody who wants it worse than I do should have some of it—as a sort of atonement, heave-offering, or something. Do you take?"

"I don't see why you should atone for some one else's wrongdoing."

"Don't you? Thought you went in for vicarious atonement. Perhaps only on Sundays, eh? Well, the long and short of it is, that I want to convey, or settle, or whatever you call it, a definite sum of money on Sandy Maxwell, on certain conditions. I am a tolerably rich man now, with capacities for becoming richer, and you may depend on it I'm a jolly sight too egotistic to surrender a bit more than I can spare."

"Dear me! I wish there were some more of your kind of egotism going about. But you know we can't accept that."

"I'm not asking you to accept it. It's for Sandy. I want you to take it from me, put it in your bank, or however you do things, and give it him like an allowance, on certain conditions. Let it come from yourself, or some newly-discovered uncle of his in a foreign clime, or anything of that kind."

"Well, I don't know that I'm justified in refusing an offer of this—er—unusual kind, made for the good of a third party. But you know him, you have your eyes open, and you can do what you please, I suppose. What are the conditions?"

"One, that you don't let him know, directly or indirectly, the real source of this—my late father, you know."

"Yes."

"The other, that if he and your daughter May wish to marry, you don't put obstacles in the way. You may call this cheek, but as you say, I've got my eyes open, and know the man perhaps even better than you do. Give 'em a period of probation if you like, and see if he isn't a different man now to what he was before. Work and sorrow came into his programme. No man ever did big things in this world who didn't know work and sorrow. Ask all the big men dead and alive."

"You know this is all very sudden."

"Not a bit. I've been thinking it all over long ago. I always think things thoroughly over myself before I begin talking about them to other people. Then I can depend upon you to help me in carrying out this plan?"

"Well, I don't know any absolute objection to the course you describe, but I must be given plenty of time for consideration."

"My dear sir, which is best, to give a cheerful consent to things you can't prevent, or to see them happen in spite of your prohibitions?"

"Well, well, I'll think it over."

"There isn't much time. He'll be back this afternoon. You can't find out by thinking it over anything I can't tell you now. I'm afraid I must ask you to say yes or no."

"Yes, then, Corsar. And I must say that I never heard of such a proposition in my life before, and that I assent under protest."

"All right. I will make a note of the protest."

"But there will be a good deal of necessary delay about the mere formal part of this process."

"Will there? Oh, I think not. What is your bank?"

"London and County."

Carl produced a cheque.

"Fill in London and County Bank in that cross. What else is necessary?"

"My dear Corsar, you are evidently not used to business habits. This is absurdly precipitate and informal."

"My dear Mr. Raynham, I have had one habit all my life, and that is, when I want a thing done, to do it in the shortest effective way. If I hadn't confidence in your personal fitness to accept this trust, conferences with forty solicitors couldn't give it to me."

"Oh, well, have your own way."

"Certainly. I always do when I can. Thanks very much. I must be off now. See you again by-and-bye."

\* \* \* \* \*

In the afternoon a bow window in King Street, Watermouth, was again occupied by the expectant Raynhams. Mrs. Raynham had sufficiently recovered from the awful shock she had received (that of hearing the truth about Cyrus Shute) to be able to say she "never liked the man" and "always said he was a horrid man," at which her family smiled covertly at each other. May was sorry for him—which no other human being in the Eastern or Western Hemisphere in all probability was.

In another window a different group were sitting, consisting of Carl, and Jenny, and that splendid stern-faced, tender-hearted old lady, Mrs. Maclean, and her granddaughter. Mrs. Maclean sat upright with both hands resting on the handle of her stick, and her keen, grey eyes, in their pale, wrinkled sockets, wandered impatiently from the street to the clock, and back to the street again. "When will they get, were ye sayin', Mr. Corsar?" said she.

"It's uncertain for half an hour or so. It takes time and caution to get into the harbour with a big ship."

"Will they play the pipes when the ship lands?"

"Most likely."

"I shall hear that. I heard it last when my husband, Kenneth Maclean, went to the Crimea, near thirty years ago.



I wonder who will hear them first, Mr. Corsar, I or your young leddy ye spoke of, who is waitin' for her friend—the gentleman whose life ma boy Georgie saved ?”

(“Ma boy Georgie” was Sergeant-Major Maclean, aged forty-six.)

“I almost wish you were a soldier, Carl,” said Jenny ; “for the coming back part only, I mean, not the going away.”

“Going away is, unfortunately, an indispensable condition to coming back ; though the reverse, more unfortunately, does not hold.”

The crowd on the pavements below swayed and fidgeted, and seemed permeated suddenly with some exciting knowledge. Then there was a pause of some minutes' excited silence. Then, in the dockyard, a great shout arose afar off, and was transmitted in waves along the crowd. And above that shout was heard the loud and joyous skirl of “Bonnie laddie, Hieland laddie,” coming nearer and nearer. And the crowd shouted, and laughed, and cried, because their sons, and lovers, and fathers were come back ; and some remembered, with inexpressible bitterness, the farewell a few months ago of those—too many—who had Not come back from the Distant Land, but had won eternal quarters in the Farther Land—called of the Leal.

For Valhalla was fuller by thirty-seven Scots mothers' sons in this regiment.

And they came on, shoulder to shoulder, changing the tune to—

“March, march ! Ettrick and Teviotdale,  
Why the de'il canna ye march in order.”

And when the first swinging sporrans, discoloured tartans, and pith helmets began to pass, Mrs. Maclean rose, and stood up at the open window, and said, “God bless ye !” And the pipes played, and the men swung along, and the crowd shouted, and clung to them, and shook hands with them, and cheered, above all, the thin, bony old face, with the kind, sad, blue eyes and the long, white moustache, of the colonel commanding—who had been a well-known figure in Watermouth for a long time before—as he passed slowly along on his horse, with the plaid blowing out like a jib behind him in the breeze. And old soldiers pointed out to their friends that he had medals or

clasps for Balaclava, Inkermann, and Lucknow, as well as a certain bronze cross.

And the skirl of the pipes died away in the distance. Not long afterwards Mrs. and Miss Maclean found a son and a father, with a pale brown face and one arm, and then Carl and Jenny left them, and joined the Raynhams.

"There's that Mr. Corsar," said Mrs. Raynham, "and a young lady with him, coming this way."

"I wouldn't call him 'that' Mr. Corsar, if I were you," said John Raynham; "as he has been a better friend to all of us than any human being I know."

"Oh, I daresay! he thought by being civil to you he might get into society through us. But I don't like him. He is talked about. He gave evidence, or was mixed up somehow with that awful murder trial, and they are evidently very queer people."

"Oh, I daresay we shall hear he murdered somebody next. Now look here, I generally take things pretty easy, and let everybody have a loose rein, as you know, but I distinctly insist that my friend, Carl Corsar, shall be treated with proper consideration. I don't mean monosyllabic civility,—which is women's way of being impertinent,—or any of the hundred and one dodges for making people 'feel their position' with actual rudeness. Don't sniff, or keep up idiotic society smiles, and say that regiment looked 'very nice,' with your heads on one side, and that it must be 'very nice' for the mothers and fathers of sons to find them again, and be able to laugh and cry on their necks. Be kind as well as civil to him. You know well enough how, though you don't know how much he deserves it."

"Hear, hear!" said May. "Well done, papa! Never heard you come out so strongly before in your life. Oh! here is Sandy!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mr. Raynham," said Carl Corsar, "let me introduce my wife."

Sensation. Sandy grinning, in his discoloured and muddy old uniform, as he sat in a chair murmuring to May. Mrs. Raynham of course offended because Sandy had been received with general effusion, and because Sir Arthur Morris, the military governor, had been civil to him, also because of Carl

Corsar, and because no one took much notice of anything she said, and because she was not the principal person present, and was generally, as May mischievously remarked to Sandy, "Rather out of it." So she had put up glasses and looked at Jenny.

However, May was everything in the way of kindness and attention Jenny could desire, and so was her father. Ultimately, they all went, at John Raynham's invitation, to dinner, where Sandy was the hero, and told the story of his campaign; and May, listening, felt that at last Sandy really had Done Something.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Some months later, Sandy to May, in a small house in Kensington:—

"I wonder why Carl doesn't live in better style? I'm sure that deceased old scoundrel must have left him more than he seems to live on. Why, he doesn't seem a bit better off than we are with our mysterious legacy."

"I don't know, darling."

"Ah, well, Carl always was a self-centred chap. He has grown stingier as he grew older, I suppose. I'll chaff him about it."

And that was the thanks Carl Corsar, the self-centred, got.

THE END.

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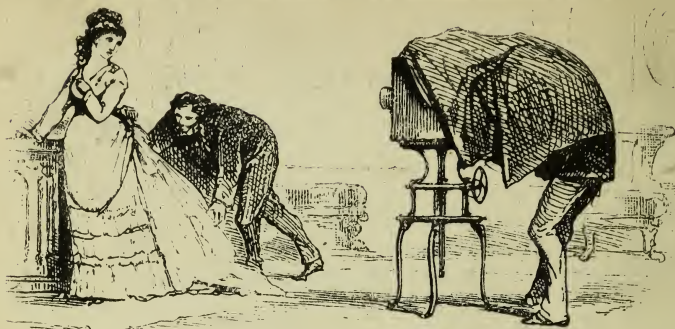
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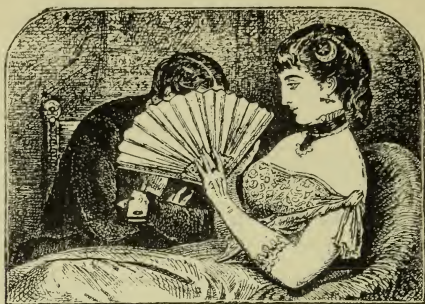
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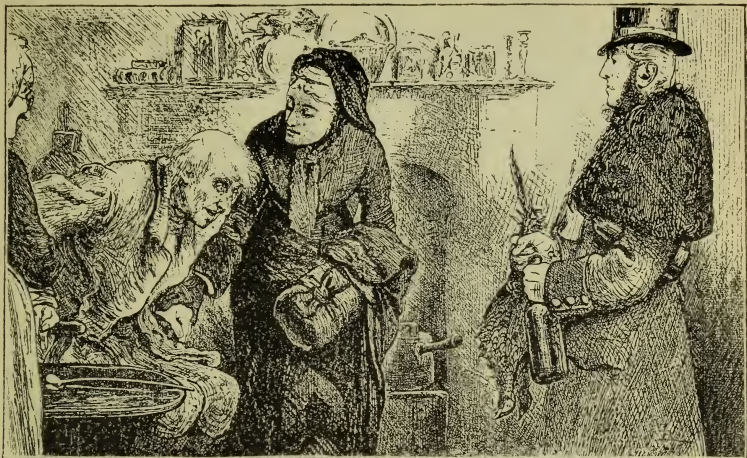
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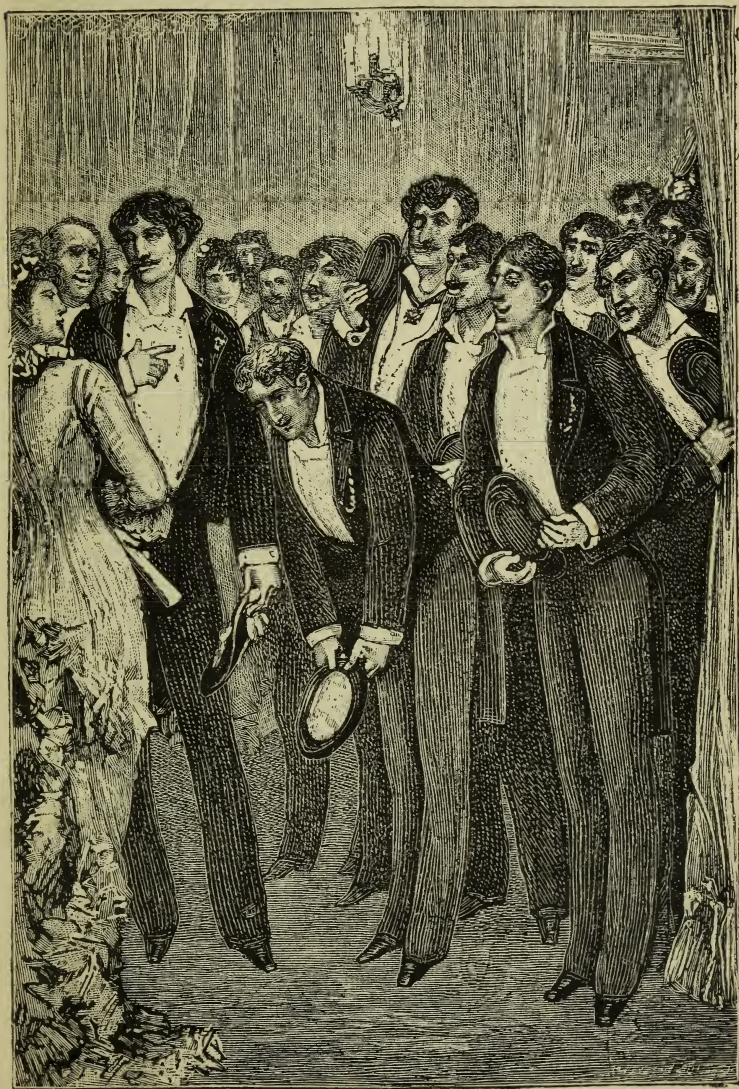
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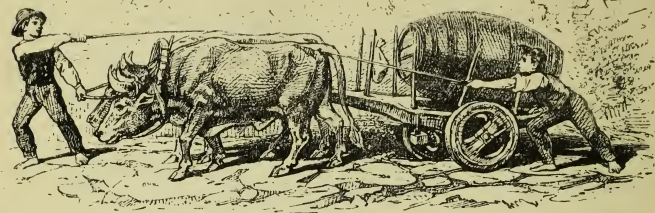
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